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NAD

AN

INQUIRY

INTO THE

BEAUTIES OF PAINTING;

AND INTO THE

MERITS

OF THE MOST

CELEBRATED PAINTERS,

ANCIENT and MODERN.

By DANIEL WEBB, Esq.

The SECOND EDITION.

Οτις μη ασπαζεται τὴν ζωγραφιαν, αδικει τὴν αληθειαν, αδικει δε και σοφιαν ὁποση ες ποιητας ἡκει, φορα γαρ ιση αμφοιν ες τα των ἡρωων εἰδη, και ἐργα. ———

Philostratus in exord. Iconum.

LONDON,

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY, in *Pall-mall.*

MDCCLXI.

Webb
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Captain Dan.l Hall
of the 46th Regiment.

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TO THE

Reverend Mr. SPENCE.

SIR,

THE moſt accurate obſerver of the beauties of nature, muſt be the beſt judge of their imitations; and the ſame elegance of imagination which forms the painter, muſt enlighten the critic. It was natural for me, under this perſuaſion, to addreſs my obſervations on Painting to the author of CRITO.

How ingenious are men in colouring their paſſions! thus have I heightened ſelf-love into a love of juſtice: For, what could be more

advantageous to me, than to have it known, that Mr. SPENCE approves me as a writer, and acknowledges me as a friend? What ſucceſs I may have in the former character, muſt depend on futurity; but I am in poſſeſſion of all the credit of the latter, while you permit me to declare, in this publick manner,

That I am, REVEREND SIR,

with the trueſt reſpect,

your moſt obliged,

moſt obedient,

and moſt humble ſervant,

DANIEL WEBB.

PREFACE.

IF we conſider the ambition moſt men have to be thought judges of Painting, and the eaſe with which they might really become ſo, it will appear ſtrange, that ſo few ſhould be found, who have any clear or determined ideas of this art. To account for this, and to point out thoſe errors which have been the cauſes of it, is the deſign of this Preface; after which, I propoſe, by the following work, to free this ſubject from its ſuppoſed

 difficulties;

difficulties; and to throw ſuch lights on the beauties and advantages of this amiable art, as may both recommend the ſtudy, and facilitate the knowledge of it.

I AM ſenſible, that, among my readers, there will be ſome, whoſe excellent taſte and clear judgment muſt place them much above my inſtructions; from theſe I hope for indulgence. The perſons for whom I write, are our young travellers, who ſet out with much eagerneſs, and little preparation; and who, for want of ſome governing objects to determine their courſe, muſt continually wander, miſled by ignorant guides, or bewildered by a multiplicity of directions. The firſt error, I have taken

taken notice of, is, the extreme eagerneſs, with which they run through the galleries and churches; *nimium vident, nec tamen totum.* A few good pictures, well conſidered, at ſuch intervals, as to give full time to range and determine the ideas which they excite, would in the end turn to a much better account.

THE ſecond error, is, the habit of eſtimating pictures by the general reputation of the painters; a rule, of all others, the moſt productive of ignorance and confuſion. For example; Dominichino may, at times, be ranked with Raphael; at times, he is little ſuperior to Giotto. And we often find, that the beſt works of the middling artiſts, excell the middling works of the

beſt. If then, we are guided wholly by the prejudice of names, we no longer truſt to our own ſenſes; we muſt acknowledge merit which we do not ſee, and undervalue that which we do; diſtreſſed between authority and conviction, we are diſguſted with the difficulties of an art, which is, perhaps, of all others the moſt eaſily underſtood. For, that compoſition muſt be defective, which cannot, to a careful obſerver, point out its own tendency; and thoſe expreſſions muſt be either weak or falſe, which do not, in ſome degree, mark the intereſt of each actor in the drama. In nature, we readily conceive the variety and force of characters; why ſhould we not do ſo in Painting? What difficulty

culty can there be in diſtinguiſhing, whether the airs of the heads be mean or noble; the ſtyle of deſign, confined, charged, or elegant; whether the proportions be juſt or unequal; the carnations, cold or animated? If the colours in a picture be happily diſpoſed, the general effect will be pleaſing; and in proportion to the force of the clear obſcure, the figures and objects will be flat or projecting, or, in other words, more or leſs like nature. If we conſider theſe points without prejudice, it will, I think, appear, that of all the arts, Painting is the moſt natural both in its means and effects. It is the moſt direct and immediate addreſs to the ſenſes: and this muſt be the reaſon, that the beſt writers

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we have hitherto followed in the ſtudy of Painting. This is what I propoſe by the Eſſay which I here offer to the publick. I ſhall uſe no art, however cuſtomary it may be on theſe occaſions, to prepare the judgment, or conciliate the good opinion of my readers: One thing only it may be neceſſary to excuſe; I have been forced, in ſome meaſure, to take certain liberties of ſtyle, which, though common in other languages, have not yet been received into ours. Thus I have uſed the MECHANICK, and IDEAL of an art, inſtead of the mechanick, or ideal part of an art; as likewiſe CLEARS and OBSCURES, for clear and obſcure colours. I have borrowed the word NUD from the French; SBOZZO from the Italian; and

and have tranſlated the CHIAROSCURO of the latter into the clear obſcure. Theſe are little licences, unavoidable, in treating of an art, which has not as yet been thoroughly naturalized; and I even wiſh, that they may not be overlooked, in the number of leſs excuſable defects.

CON-

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DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE I.

General Plan of the WORK.

B. WHEN you advanced the other day, in a circle of virtuoſo's, that the ancients were, in painting, as in all the other polite arts, equal, if not ſuperior, to the moderns; your aſſertion was received with an univerſal diſlike. However different my ſentiments were from yours at the time, I was yet perſuaded, that you would not have given into ſo ſingular an opinion, without having good reaſons to ſupport it. I mentioned to you then my doubts, and you was ſo good as to promiſe me you would remove them.

A. I was not at all ſurpriſed at the diſſatisfaction you remarked in thoſe gentlemen; it is unpleaſing to have an opinion brought into doubt, which we have looked upon all our lives as indiſputable. You ſhall now be a judge of the grounds I had for my aſſertion. Had we no other object in view, but merely to determine the different merits of the artiſts, it would hardly be worth the labour; but, by examining the teſtimonies which we ſhall draw from the writings of the ancients, and comparing their ideas with the paintings of the moderns, we ſhall enlarge our conceptions, and improve our knowledge of the art itſelf.

B. THIS proſpect which you have opened upon me, gives me a ſingular pleaſure; for, after having read, with the utmoſt attention, the ſeveral authors on this ſubject, I cannot ſay, that I have received from them the inſtruction I expected.

A. THIS

A. THIS does not proceed from a want of capacity in them, but from a defect in their plans: they are, as you know, biographers; and, as the perſons whoſe lives they write, are all of one profeſſion, the continued repetition of the ſame thoughts, and of the ſame technical terms, tire and diſtract the reader. There is another objection to their manner of writing; their ideas, however juſt, are ſo ſcattered through the different parts of their works, that they are not eaſily reducible to any ſyſtem. In the expoſition of an art, as in the diſtribution of a picture, a looſe diſperſion of the objects, confounds both the eye and the underſtanding. But, theſe writers are ſubject to a ſtill greater diſadvantage; for, as the painters whoſe talents they deſcribe, if we except a very few, excelled much more in the mechanick, than in the ideal part of painting, it throws the force of their obſervations on that point, with which

we, who are but obſervers of the art, have the leaſt to do.

B. THOUGH I underſtand very well the terms mechanick and ideal, in their general acception, yet, I wiſh you would explain them, in their particular relation to the ſubject before us.

A. WE may conſider the imitative arts in two points of view; 1ſt, As imitations of ſuch objects as are actually before the eye; 2dly, As repreſentations of thoſe images which are formed by the fancy. The firſt, is the mechanick or executive part of the art; the ſecond, the ideal or inventive. [*a*] Tully has juſtly diſtinguiſhed thoſe

[*a*] Nec verò ille artifex, quum faceret Jovis formam aut Minervæ, contemplabatur aliquem è quo ſimilitudinem duceret; ſed ipſius in mente inſidebat ſpecies pulchritudinis eximia quædam, quam intuens, in eaque defixus, ad illius ſimilitudinem artem et manum dirigebat. In Bruto.

parts,

parts, when he obſerves, that the Jupiter of Phidias was not drawn from any pattern in nature, but from that idea of unexampled beauty, which the artiſt had formed in his mind. The great difference, obſerved among painters of any name, ariſes from their different excellencies in theſe two parts: thoſe, whoſe chief merit is in the mechanick, will, like the Dutch painters, be ſervile copiers of the works of nature; but thoſe, who give wholly into the ideal, without perfecting themſelves in the mechanick, will produce [*b*] *ſbozzo's*, not pictures: it is evident then, that the perfection of the art conſiſts in an union of theſe two parts. Of all the moderns, Raphael ſeems to have come the neareſt to this point. The next to him is, perhaps, Correggio. I have ſaid *perhaps*, becauſe, though there is no great variety in his

[*b*] The rough draught of a picture.

ideas, yet are they ſometimes ſo happy, attended with ſuch grace, and executed with ſuch truth, that, as there is no one artiſt whoſe paintings we ſee with more pleaſure, ſo is there no one, whoſe impreſſions we receive more warmly, or remember longer; and this laſt is the teſt of perfect painting. But before I enter further into our ſubject, it may not be improper, to lay before you the method I propoſe to obſerve. Firſt then, we will examine our capacity to judge of the imitative arts; to determine which, we muſt previouſly fix the limits between taſte and ſcience. In the next place, we may conſider the true value of theſe arts, which muſt be eſtimated, by their antiquity, their degree of credit with every polite nation, and, above all, by their uſefulneſs to ſociety. I ſhall then divide painting, which is our principal object, into its four leading branches, namely, deſign, colouring, clear obſcure, and compoſition. Concerning each

of

of theſe, I ſhall endeavour to point out its different beauties and ends; how far the ancients ſeem to have attained thoſe ends; and of courſe, what light they muſt ſtand in, on a compariſon with the moderns. One ſatisfaction you will have in this progreſs, that, almoſt every ſtep we take, will be on claſſick ground; and, as all the teſtimonies I uſe, or lights I borrow, are from the beſt writers of antiquity, the vivacity and good ſenſe in their remarks will at once entertain, and guide us in our purſuit. As the day is now too far ſpent to enter upon our ſubject, to-morrow, if you pleaſe, we will begin; and dedicate a morning to each of the diviſions, in the order I juſt now ſtated them.

DIALOGUE II.

Of our Capacity to judge of PAINTING.

[c] THE learned, ſays Quintilian, know the principles of an art, the illiterate its effects. He has, in thoſe words, fixed the boundaries between taſte and ſcience. Were I to define the former, I ſhould ſay, [d] that taſte was a facility in the mind

[c] Docti rationem artis intelligunt, indocti voluptatem. Lib. ix. 4.

[d] Many writers have oppoſed judgment to taſte, as if they were diſtinct faculties of the mind; but this muſt be a miſtake: The ſource of taſte is feeling, ſo is it of judgment, which is nothing more than this ſame ſenſibility, improved by the ſtudy of its proper objects, and brought to a juſt point of certainty and correctneſs. Thus it is clear, that theſe are but different degrees of the ſame faculty, and that they are exerciſed wholly on our own ideas; but, ſcience is the remembrance or aſſemblage of the ideas of others;

to

to be moved by what is excellent in an art; it is a feeling of the truth. But, ſcience is to be informed of that truth, and of the means by which its effects are produced. It is eaſy to conceive, that, different as theſe principles may be in their ſetting out, they muſt often unite in their deciſions: This agreement will occaſion their being miſtaken one for the other, which is the caſe, when it is affirmed, that no one but an artiſt can form a right judgment of ſculpture or painting. This maxim may hold indeed with reſpect to the mechanick of an art, but not at all as to its effects; the evidence and force of which, are what determine both the value of the art, and merit of the artiſt. What [*e*] Tully obſerves of an excellent

and hence it ſometimes happens, that men the moſt remarkable for this kind of knowledge, are not equally ſo, for their ſenſibility.

[*e*] Id enim ipſum eſt ſummi oratoris, ſummum oratorem populo videri. In Bruto.

orator,

orator, may as juſtly be ſaid of an excellent painter; his ſuperiority will be evident even to the leaſt intelligent judges. But neither authority nor argument give a weight to our opinions, touching any art we treat of, equal to the illuſtrations and examples which they lend each other. Happily, [*f*] the near affinity that is obſerved between the polite arts, they being indeed all but different means of addreſſing the ſame paſſions, makes this, at once, the moſt effectual and ready method of conveying our ideas. I find in Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus an obſervation on muſick much to my purpoſe. [*g*] "I

[*f*] Omnes artes, quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quaſi cognatione inter ſe continentur. Cic. pro Archia poëta.

[*g*] Εγωγε και εν τοις πολυανθρωποτατοις θεατροις, ἁ συμπληροι παντοδαπος και αμυσος οχλος, εδοξα καταμαθειν, ὡς φυσικη τις εστιν ἁπαντων ἡμων οικειοτης προς ευμελειαν τε και ευρυθμιαν· Κιθαριστην τε αγαθον σφοδρα ευδοκιμουντα ιδω

have

"have learned," ſays he, "in theatres fill-
"ed with a promiſcuous and illiterate
"crowd, what a kind of natural correſ-
"pondence we all have with melody,
"and the agreement of ſounds: Having
"known the moſt admired and able mu-
"ſician to be hiſſed by the whole multi-
"tude, when he has ſtruck a ſingle ſtring
"out of tune, to the diſturbance of har-
"mony; yet, put this ſame inſtrument
"into the hands of one of thoſe ſimple-
"tons, with orders to expreſs that note,
"which he would exact from the artiſt,
"he cannot do it. Whence is this? The
"one is the effect of ſcience, the lot but
"of a few; the other of feeling, which

θορυβηθεῖτα ὑπο του πληθους, ὁτι μιαν χορδην ασυμφωνον εκρουσε, και εφθειρε το μελος· καιτοι ειτις κελευσειε τον ιδιωτην τουτων τι ὡν ενεκαλει τοις τεχνιταις ὡς ἡμαρτημενων, αυτον ποιησαι λαβοντα τα οργανα, ουκ αν δυναιτο. τι δη ποτε; ὁτι τουτο μεν επιστημης εστιν, ἡς ου παντες μετειληφαμεν· εκεινο δε παθους, ὁ πασιν απεδωκεν ἡ φυσις. Dion. Halicarn. De ſtruct. orat. ſect. xi.

"nature

"nature has beſtowed on all." This applies itſelf to our preſent ſubject: The eye has its principle of correſpondence with what is juſt, beautiful, and elegant: It acquires, like the ear, an [*b*] habitual delicacy; and anſwers, with the ſame fidelity and preciſion, to the fineſt impreſſions: Verſed in the works of the beſt painters, it ſoon learns to diſtinguiſh true expreſſions from falſe, and grace from affectation; quickened by exerciſe, and confirmed by compariſon, it outſtrips reaſoning; and feels in an inſtant that truth, which the other developes by degrees.

B. You have been deſcribing, what Tully calls a learned, and we, I think, may term a chaſte eye. But, do you not, in this proceſs, make the growth of taſte

[*b*] Conſuetudo oculorum. Cic. lib. iv. Acad. quæſt.

to

to be little more than a ſenſitive vegetation, withdrawing it wholly from its dependency on ſcience?

A. LET us obſerve its advances in poetry, as we have before in muſick: This too, will be the more deciſive, as poetry is an union of the two powers of muſick and picture. In this, the imagination, on its firſt ſetting out, ever prefers extravagance to juſtneſs, or falſe beauties to true; it kindles at the flaſhes of Claudian; and flutters at the points of Statius; this is its childhood. As it grows in vigour, it refines in feeling; till, ſuperior to its firſt attractions, it reſts on the tender pathetick of Virgil; or the manly ſpirit of Lucretius. Exactly parallel to this, is the progreſs of the eye in painting; its firſt affections are always ill placed: it is enamoured with the ſplendid

did impoſitions of Rubens, or the [*i*] theatrical grace of Guido; this laſts not long; it grows chaſte in its purſuit; and ſlighting thoſe falſe beauties, dwells on the native and mellow tints of Titian; on the unforced attitudes, and elegant ſimplicity of Raphael. Was this change, in both caſes, the reſult of reaſoning, or produced by a

[*i*] The grace of Guido is rather technical than ideal; by the firſt is meant a certain flow of Contour, invariably applied to every character, and on every occaſion. Thus the daughter of Herodias receives the head of St. John, with the ſtudied dignity of an actreſs; and the victorious St. Michael, treads on the body of his antagoniſt, with all the preciſion of a dancing maſter. By an ideal grace, I underſtand that particular image, which in the inſtant ſtrikes a polite imagination, as peculiar to the action and character before it—Of this the Sancta Cecilia of Raphael, and the Magdalen in the St. Jerome of Coreggio, are the happieſt examples: The gracefulneſs in theſe figures is not only proper to their characters, but gives a ſingular force and beauty to the expreſſion. It was from this happineſs, that the venuſtas of Apelles became proverbial; as, among us, any action that is ſingularly graceful, is termed Correggieſque.

growing knowledge of the rules of each art, we ſhould mark its advances; the contrary of which is almoſt ever the caſe; ſo that we are often ſurpriſed at this alteration in ourſelves, and wonder, that the ideas and objects which affected us ſo warmly at firſt, ſhould, in a ſhort courſe of time, act ſo coldly upon us: Nay, ſome men there are, and thoſe too very capable of judging in other matters, who never riſe to this change; but continue, to the laſt, under the influence of the ſame boyiſh and wanton imagination.

B. THE greateſt difficulty in your ſyſtem, would be, to deduce the different degrees, as well as diverſity of our taſtes, from this ſame univerſal principle of feeling.

A. THE firſt, I ſhould think, may be accounted for, from the different proportions of that ſenſibility, as beſtowed on us by

by nature, or improved by ourſelves: The ſecond, from the diverſity in our imaginations, in the direction given to them by education, and the conſtitutional or temporary flow of the animal ſpirits. But, as this is an inquiry quite beyond my reach, I ſhall leave it to thoſe, who can trace the progreſs of our ideas; and can determine, and account for the various influences of outward objects on our ſenſes. Inſtead of loſing our time in ſuch endleſs diſquiſitions, let us found our knowledge on facts; and paſs from them to natural and uſeful concluſions. "The [*k*] Lacedemonians," ſays Atheneus, "are no "where repreſented as being themſelves "muſicians; yet, the purity of their taſte "in this art, is univerſally acknowledged; "they having, at three different times,

[*k*] Λακεδαιμονιοι, ει μεν εμαθαυον την μουσικην, ουδεν λεγουσιν· ὁτι δε κρινειν δυναιλαι καλως την τεχνην, ὁμολογειται, παρ' αυτων γαρ φασι τριε ηδη σεσωκεναι διαφθειρομενην αυτην. Athenæus, lib. xiii. Deipnoſoph. c. 6,

when

" when it was corrupted and loſt, reſtored " and preſerved it." The following obſervation by Tully, at the ſame time that it illuſtrates, receives authority from this fact.—" All [*l*] men, by a kind of tacit " feeling, without art or ſcience, diſtin- " guiſh, in both caſes, what is right from " what is wrong; and, as they evidently do " ſo in painting and ſculpture, ſo, *&c. &c.* And again: " It is wonderful, ſays he, that, " ſeeing the difference is ſo great between " the knowing and the ignorant, in the " practice of an art, that the difference " ſhould be ſo far from great, in their " judgments concerning it."

[*l*] Omnes enim tacito quodam ſenſu, ſine ulla arte aut ratione, quæ ſint in artibus ac rationibus recta ac parva dijudicant; idque cum faciunt in picturis et in ſignis, &c. &c.

Mirabile eſt, cùm plurimùm in faciendo interſit inter doctum et rudem, quam non multùm differat in judicando. De Oratore, lib. iii.

B. You have, I think, fully eſtabliſhed the principle you contend for; namely, that we have all within us the ſeeds of taſte, and are capable, if we exerciſe our powers, of improving them into a ſufficient knowledge of the polite arts. I am perſuaded, that nothing is a greater hinderance to our advances in any art, than the high opinion we form of the judgment of its profeſſors, and the proportionable diffidence of our own. I have rarely met with an artiſt, who was not an implicit admirer of ſome particular ſchool, or a ſlave to ſome favourite manner. They ſeldom, like gentlemen and ſcholars, riſe to an unprejudiced and liberal contemplation of true beauty. The difficulties they find in the practice of their art, tie them down to the mechanick: at the ſame time, that ſelf-love and vanity lead them into an admiration of

thoſe ſtrokes of the pencil, which come the neareſt to their own. I knew a painter at Rome, a man of ſenſe too, who talked much more of Jacinto Brandi, than he did either of Correggio or Raphael.

DIALOGUE III.

Of the Antiquity and Uſefulneſs of PAINTING.

THOUGH the antiquity of an art is not that which ſhould determine its value, yet, it creates a reſpect, and increaſes, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, its conſequence with us, when we know it to have been the ſtudy and purſuit of the earlieſt ages. The connection that prevails between the polite arts, extends not only to a ſimilitude in their operations and effects, it marks likewiſe a kind of ſiſter-hood in their origin: For, as the different branches of the ſame art are ever obſerved to flouriſh together; ſo, the power of drawing men to our ends by flattering their imaginations, or intereſting their paſſions being

ing exerted in any one mode, we may reaſonably promiſe ourſelves the invention of the reſt. Hence we muſt always expect to ſee painting, eloquence, and ſculpture advancing like the Graces, hand in hand, to perfection: They ſhould, like the glories of the rainbow, ſhine forth at once in a friendly ſplendor; and, to continue the image, they ſhould too, like thoſe, fade and go out in an immediate ſucceſſion: — Accordingly this has been in all times the caſe. "[*m*] For who, ſays an "ancient writer, can ſufficiently wonder, "that the moſt eminent geniuſes in every "profeſſion, ſhould appear in the ſame "degrees of excellence, and at the ſame "critical point of time?" It had been ſo in the ages of Alexander the Great, and

[*n*] Quis enim abunde mirari poteſt, quod eminentiſſima cujuſque profeſſionis ingenia, in eandem formam, et in idem arctati temporis congruant ſpatium? Vell. Pat. Hiſt. lib. i. c. 16.

Auguſtus; and was ſo afterwards, in thoſe of Leo X, and Lewis XIV. If, therefore, that which has been invariable in the hiſtorical ages, may, by a juſt analogy, be extended to thoſe which preceded them, I ſhould have no more difficulty in pronouncing, that there were painters before the time of Homer, than Tully had in affirming, that there were poets. Though the reaſon of things may be ſufficient to eſtabliſh this opinion; yet, we have ſtill ſurer grounds to reſt on: Sculpture and painting muſt, from their nature, be inſeparable, as deſign is the parent of both. That the firſt of theſe exiſted before Homer, we can have no doubt, when we read his deſcription of the ſhield of Achilles; the compoſition of which would do honour to a Fiammingo, or Algardi. He ſays, in one place, that the earth grew dark under the plow. This ſhows, that they then knew

knew the [*n*] art of colouring metals by fire, or by their mixtures; this is an evident imitation of painting: it is, beſide, a refinement; and ſpeaks the art, not in its infancy, but at full growth. If we allow then in this caſe, the ſame ſpace of time, to bring it from its birth to its perfection, which every other art, though of leſs compaſs than this, has taken, we ſhall find it in being at the time of the [*o*] Trojan war. I ſhould not be ſo particular in tracing the origin of ſculpture, and conſequently of painting, to this era, were it not, that

[*n*] This art was loſt in the time of Pliny. Quondam æs confuſum auro argentoque miſcebatur, et tamen ars pretioſior erat: Nunc incertum eſt, pejor hæc ſit, an materia; mirumque cum ad infinitum operum pretia creverint, ars extincta eſt. Lib. xxxiv. c. 2.

[*o*] Servius, ad ver. 392, 393. Æneid. ii. has the following note: Scutis Græcorum, Neptunus; Trojanorum, fuit Minerva depicta. And again, ad ver. 784. Æneid. x. Lino tegebantur ſcuta, ut poſſent inhærere picturæ.

Pliny confidently affirms, that the latter did not exiſt in thoſe times; for which, however, he gives no reaſon, any more than he does, for treating as ridiculous the aſſertion of the Egyptians, that they practiſed painting, many thouſand years before it was known in Greece. Whoever conſults [*p*] Tacitus will find, that the Egyptians knew deſign, and ſculptured marble, long before they had the knowledge of letters; which, Cadmus, a deſcendent of theirs, many ages after, introduced into Greece.

B. WHAT you have offered concerning the Egyptians, is confirmed by a later and undoubted example. When the Spaniards firſt arrived in America, the

[*p*] Primi per figuras animalium Ægyptii ſenſus mentis effingebant, et antiquiſſima monumenta memoriæ humanæ impreſſa ſaxis cernuntur. Annal. lib. xi. cap. 14.

news was ſent to the Emperor in painted expreſſes, they not having at that time the uſe of letters.

A. As it is evident that paint bears the immediate ſtamp, and very image of our conceptions, [q] ſo it was natural, that men ſhould ſooner hit on this method of repreſenting their thoughts, than by letters, which have no connection with, or reſemblance to the ideas they ſtand for: From whence, no leſs than from the authority of hiſtory, it has been juſtly concluded, that writing is of a much later invention than painting. But that which brought the antiquity of the latter ſo much

[q] It is to be obſerved, that, in the Greek tongue, the ſame word (γραφειν) ſignifies to paint, or to write; which is eaſily accounted for, if we ſuppoſe that, like the Egyptians, they firſt explained their thoughts by paint: So that, afterwards, when letters were diſcovered, though they changed the manner, they continued the term.

into

into doubt, was the vanity of the Greeks. Piqued that any other nation ſhould have the honour of its invention, they dated its origin from its firſt appearance among themſelves; they tell us of a certain maid, who to have ſome preſent image of her lover, who was about to leave her, [r] drew the out-lines of his ſhadow on a wall.

B. IT was prettily imagined however, to make the moſt amiable of all our paſſions give birth to the moſt pleaſing of all arts.

A. Pliny who mentions this, objects to the Greeks their inconſiſtency, and want of accuracy. The firſt painter they name, lived in the nintieth olympiad; upon which

[r] Hence the art itſelf was by the Greeks termed Σκιαγραφια· and in the Latin, *Adumbrare* and *Pingere* are ſynonymous.

he

he obſerves, that Candaules, "a king "of Lydia, who died in the eighteenth, "gave an immenſe price for a picture "by Bularchus; to which he adds, [*s*] "it is manifeſt, that the art was even "then in its full beauty and perfection; "which, if we are forced to allow, it "neceſſarily follows, that its beginnings "muſt have been much more ancient."

THE Picturæ Ardeæ, ſo much praiſed by Pliny, were, as he tells us, painted before the foundation of Rome; as were the Atalanta and Helena at Lanuvium, by the ſame hand; each of excellent beauty. This is a ſecond proof, that painting was at a high point of perfection before the inſtitution of the olympiads. Having thus eſtabliſhed the reputation of

[*s*] Manifeſtâ jam tum claritate artis atque abſolutione; quod ſi recipi neceſſe eſt, ſimul apparet multò vetuſtiora principia eſſe. Lib. xxxv.

our

our art, ſo far as depends on its antiquity; I ſhall come to conſider it in a light much more to its advantage, I mean its uſefulneſs to ſociety. I ſhall enlarge the more on this, as we do not ſeem to be ſufficiently acquainted with it in this character.

Liber. Danielis Astle, Born October 15. 17. 45

WHEN Plato baniſhed poetry from his republick, it is to be wondered he did not extend his ſeverity to painting and ſculpture: It is probable, he did not ſo well know the powers of theſe arts, or how far their merit entitled then to his perſecution. It ſhould ſeem that legiſlators, for the moſt part, divide men into two extremes; to thoſe of the finer temper, they propoſe the good of ſociety, and beauty of virtue, as ſufficient motives to action: But the vulgar and ſordid natures are, by their leading paſſions, as pride, fear

fear and hope, to be compelled into virtue. Such ſyſtems as theſe may produce a Spartan ſeverity, or Roman patriotiſm, but never an Athenian politeneſs. To effect this, the ſofter paſſions, and even elegant habitudes are to be employed: Theſe only can humanize the mind, and temper it into a ſenſibility of the ſlighteſt impreſſions, and moſt exquiſite feelings. Hence ſpring attention, [*t*] civility, the fine diſguiſes of our own paſſions, and inſinuating addreſs to thoſe of others; theſe faſhion themſelves into a ſyſtem of politeneſs; ſociety becomes amiable, as well as good, and we have at laſt, the beſt incitements to

[*t*] In the ancient mythology, the Χαρίτες or Graces were made to preſide over courteſy, and outward charms: The aſſigning them this double province, was happily imagined; for civility, or the deſire to pleaſe, naturally produces a gracefulneſs of action; and ſpreads over our perſons that venuſtas, which is the completion of exterior beauty.

the

the practice of virtue, in the [*u*] agreeableneſs of its objects.

B. THUS, the firſt motives may be ſaid to act like the preſſure of the heart or current of the blood; their operations are evident: But the latter, of a more refined nature, like the animal ſpirits, though they work unperceived, give life and movement to well ordered ſocieties.

A. OVID takes notice of the utility, as well as the pleaſure we receive from an encouragement of the polite arts [*x*].

Each pleaſing art lends ſoftneſs to the mind,
And, with our ſtudies, are our lives refin'd.

[*u*] This was well underſtood by Confucius, the Chineſe legiſlator; who ranks civility with gratitude, in the claſs of cardinal virtues.

[*x*] Scilicet ingenium placida mollitur ab arte,
Et ſtudio mores convenienter eunt.
Lib. iii. de Arte.

And

And Petronius views their effects in a moral light, obſerving, [y] that violent paſſions dwell *in the* rude, but take no hold of a cultivated mind.—Were we then to conſider the arts merely as objects of elegant ſpeculation, or as the means of poliſhing and ſoftening our manners, we could not prize them too highly; but their effects are much more extenſive. The powers of eloquence and muſick are univerſally acknowledged; ſo would be thoſe of paint were they as univerſally exerciſed. The Athenians paſſed a law, that none who were not of a liberal birth, ſhould practiſe in this art: They could not better ſhow the ſenſe they had of its power than in the care they took of its direction. They knew the dominion it had over our paſſions, and hence were careful to lodge it in the ſafeſt hands. Agreeable to this idea, the Greek

[y] Similiter in pectoribus ira conſidit, feras quidem mentes obſidet, eruditas prælabitur. In Satyrico.

writers

writers often ſpeak of the drama of a painter, of the moral of painting; expreſſions which mark, that they conſidered this art, as on a level, and co-operating with poetry. One of the graveſt and moſt judicious of the Romans viewed it in the ſame light. [z] Picture, ſays Quintilian, a ſilent and uniform addreſs, yet penetrates ſo deeply into our inmoſt affections, that it ſeems often to exceed even the powers of eloquence. We cannot doubt the ſincerity of this deciſion, if we conſider the character of the perſon from whom it comes. Cicero was equally ſenſible of the powers of the pencil, and often ſets them in competition with thoſe of his favourite art. Their effects are ſometimes wonderful. It is ſaid, that Alexander trembled and grew pale, on ſeeing a picture of Palamedes be-

[z] Pictura, tacens opus et habitus ſemper ejuſdem, ſic in intimos penetrate affectus, ut ipſam vim dicendi nonnunquam ſuperare videatur.

trayed

trayed to death by his friends; it bringing to his mind a ſtinging remembrance of his treatment of Ariſtonicus. Portia could bear with an unſhaken conſtancy her laſt ſeparation from Brutus; but when ſhe ſaw, ſome hours after, a picture of the parting of Hector and Andromache, ſhe burſt into a flood of tears: Full as ſeemed her ſorrow, the painter ſuggeſted new ideas of grief, or impreſs'd more ſtrongly her own. I have ſomewhere met with a pretty ſtory of an Athenian courtezan, who, in the midſt of a riotous banquet with her lovers, accidentally caſt her eye on the portrait of a philoſopher, that hung oppoſite to her ſeat; the happy character of temperance and virtue, ſtruck her with ſo lively an image of her own unworthineſs, that ſhe inſtantly quitted her room; and retiring home, became ever after an example of temperance, as ſhe had been before of debauchery. You might tax me with doing injuſtice to

the preſent times, were I to draw all my proofs from the ancient; I appeal, therefore, to yourſelf, who have had an opportunity to prove it, whether you could look on the death of Germanicus, as painted by Pouſin, without feeling a generous indignation at the cruelty of his oppreſſor, and an equal compaſſion for unhappy virtue. The repreſentation of a plague, by the ſame author, melts the ſoul into a tender participation of human miſeries: Theſe impreſſions end not here; they give a turn to the mind advantageous to ſociety; every argument of ſorrow, every object of diſtreſs, renews the ſame ſoft vibrations, and quickens us to acts of humanity and benevolence.

B. By what fatality has it been, that a nation, eminent for its productions in poetry and eloquence, capable of the greateſt efforts of genius, and bleſt with the

happieſt ſenſibility, ſhould, for ſo many ages, with a kind of wilful and Gothic rudeneſs, have withſtood the allurements of this divine art?

A. THE extraordinary paſſion which the Engliſh have for portraits, muſt ever prevent the riſe of hiſtory painting among us: The liberal, like the mechanick arts, depend wholly on the encouragement they meet with.

B. IT ſhould ſeem, that we inherit our taſte in painting from our Britiſh anceſtors; Propertius has given a picture of them, which, with the ſmalleſt allowance, might paſs for our own. [*a*]

Like the dawb'd Briton now you ſtrike the eye,
And look more trifling in a borrow'd die.

[*a*] Nunc etiam infectos demens imitare Britannos,
Ludis et externo tincta nitore caput.
Lib. ii. Eleg. 18.

It is, you ſee, the ſame ſpirit, a little varied in its operations.

A. YOUR countrymen will not thank you for having revived this branch of their inheritance. But, to reſume our ſubject; it is certain, that the love of this art has been conſidered in every civilized nation, not only as a proof of their politeneſs, but even as the teſt of their humanity. Virgil, who ſeldom hazards his reflections, has given us a ſingular inſtance of his judgment on this point. Æneas, on his landing in Africk, has many fears touching the temper and manners of the Africans; but he no ſooner ſees the walls of their temple covered with paintings, than, ſecure of a reception, he cries out in a tranſport to his friend [*b*]:

[*b*] Sunt lacrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt. Solve metum. Æneid. i.

Here

Here others ills are felt, the wretched here
Are ſure to meet the tribute of a tear.
Vain were our fears.

B. WHAT then muſt Æneas have thought, had he heard, that in that country, painting was taxed by the foot, or ſeen his helpleſs Penates hurried away to the cuſtom-houſe?

A. YOU may expect, that, before I quit the effects of paint, I ſhould ſay ſomething of the pleaſure we receive from it. But, as this is itſelf a paſſion, founded on the love of what is beautiful, and the delight we feel in having our paſſions moved, it is eaſier to affirm its exiſtence, than to explain its nature.—It is enough therefore to obſerve, that this pleaſure has prevailed in every age, and takes in all characters of men, from the

elegant obſerver of beauty, down to the illiterate ruſtic, who, as Horace humourouſly expreſſes it, ſtares, *contento papite*, at the daubings of the art, and is tranſported with the magick of a charcoal pencil.

DIA-

DIALOGUE IV.

Of DESIGN.

A. WE are told by Pliny, that all the ſtatues before the time of Dædalus, were repreſented ſtiff and motionleſs, with winking eyes, cloſed feet, and arms hanging in right lines to their ſides [*c*]: Theſe were the rude eſſays of deſign.

[*c*] Conniventibus oculis, pedibus junctis, brachiis in latera demiſſis, ſtatu rigido. —The Egyptians continued to the laſt, even when they were maſters of a perfect deſign, to repreſent their deities in the manner above deſcribed: We cannot ſuppoſe that this was owing to an ignorance of the advantages of a graceful action, but rather to their bigotted attachment to certain theological ideas. The motion they aſcribed to their divinities, was neither that of walking nor flying; Milton, who has adopted their idea, deſcribes it preciſely in the following lines,——

Beſeeching, by the hand he took me, rais'd,
And over fields and waters, as in air
SMOOTH SLIDING WITHOUT STEP, *laſt led me up*
A woody mountain.——

Dædalus, and his immediate followers, unfolded theſe embaraſſed figures; they threw motion into the limbs, and life into the countenance. In the progreſs of the art, and in abler hands, motion was faſhioned into grace, and life was heightened into character. Now, too, it was, that beauty of form was no longer confined to mere imitation, which always falls ſhort of the object imitated; to make the copy equal in its effect, it was neceſſary to give it ſome advantage over its model. The artiſt, therefore, obſerving, that nature was ſparing of her perfections, and that her efforts were limited to parts, availed himſelf of

The Greeks who borrowed their religion, as they did their arts, from the Egyptians, followed for ſome time this mode of repreſentation; till at length, (which was, perhaps, the era Pliny mentions) their averſion to every thing that was ungraceful, overcame their prejudices; and this might have been a principal reaſon, that in the end they ſo far excelled their maſters.——

her

her inequality, [*d*] and drawing theſe ſcattered beauties into a more happy and compleat union, roſe from an imperfect imitative, to a perfect ideal beauty. We are informed, that the painters of Greece preſſed in crowds to deſign the boſom and breaſts of Thais: Nor were the elegant proportions of Phryne leſs the object of their ſtudy. By this conſtant contemplation of the beautiful, they enriched their imagination and confirmed their taſte; from this fund they drew their ſyſtems of beauty; and though we ſhould conſider them but as imitators as to the parts, we muſt allow them to have been inventors in the

[*d*] Ὁνπερ τροπον, και τοις τα αγαλματα τȣτοις διαπλαττȣσιν, ὁι παν το παρ ἑκαςȣ καλον συναγαγοντες. και κατα την τεχνην εκ διαφορων σωματων αθροισαντες εις μιμησιν μιαν, καλλος ἐν ὑγιες και αρτιον και ἡρμοσμενον αυτο αυτῳ εξειργασαντο· Και ȣκ αν εὑροις σωμα ακριβες κατα αληθειαν αγαλματι ὁμοιον· Ορεγονται γαρ αἱ τεχναι τȣ καλλιςȣ.

Max. Tyr. Diſſert. xxiii. ed. Lond.

compoſitions:

compoſitions. And indeed, when we reflect on the taſte and judgment requiſite to form theſe various ideas into ſuch a wonderful agreement, we cannot ſet too high a value on their productions. The poets and writers of antiquity acknowledge this ſuperiority of invented to real beauty.—

OVID thus deſcribes Cyllarus the Centaur, [e] ——

A juſt proportion, and a manly grace,
Spread thro' his limbs, and kindled in his face.
Nature for once aſſum'd the ſculptor's part,
And in a ſtubborn beauty rival'd art.——

And Philoſtratus, ſpeaking of the beauty of Neoptolemus, remarks, that it was as much inferior to that of his father Achilles, as the handſomeſt men are to the fineſt ſtatues.

[e] Gratus in ore vigor: cervix, humerique, manuſque,
Pectoraque artifices laudatis proxima ſignis,
Exqua parte vir eſt. Metam. lib. xii.

Should

Should we still doubt of the truth or justness of the descriptions, let us observe the works which gave occasion to them. Let us contemplate the fine proportions, the style of drawing in the Laocoon and Gladiator. Let us mark the sublime of the art, in the expressive energy, the divine character of the Apollo. Let us dwell on the elegant beauties of the Venus of Medicis. These are the utmost efforts of design: It can reach no farther than a full exertion of grace, character, and beauty. We have thus traced the genius of design from its first essays to its full flight. But there is an [f] enthusiasm in every art. The Greek statuaries felt themselves straittened within the out-lines of nature; they invented new proportions, they concieved

[f] Ἐνθουσιασμον της τεχνης —— ὁ τω και Φοιδιαν ενθουσιασμα δημιουργειν. Suidas.

new

new characters. The [g] Jupiter and Minerva of Phidias were ſubjects of aſtoniſhment in the moſt enlightened ages. It ſhould ſeem, that the wonderful effect of theſe ſtatues, proceeded from an union of the beautiful, with the great and uncommon; thus combining the whole influence of viſible objects on the imagination. If we are aſtoniſhed at the firſt ſight of the Coloſſal ſtatues on the monte Cavallo at Rome, a ſecret and growing pleaſure ſucceeds this amazement: For, though the immenſity of their form ſeems, at firſt, to ſet them above the ſcale of our ideas, yet, ſo happy is the ſymmetry of their parts, ſuch a freedom of deſign, ſuch an aptneſs for action prevail throughout, that the eye ſoon becomes familiar with their proportions, and capable of their beauties.

[g] Non vidit Phidias Jovem, fecit tamen, velut tonantem; nec ſtetit ante oculos ejus Minerva, dignus tamen illa arte animus, et concepit Deos et exhibuit. Senec. Ret. lib. x.

B. IT is probable, that a great part of the pleaſure which we receive in the contemplation of ſuch Coloſſal figures, ariſes from a compariſon of their proportions with our own. The mind, in theſe moments, grows ambitious; and feels itſelf aſpiring to greater powers, and ſuperior functions: Theſe noble and exalted feelings diffuſe a kind of rapture through the ſoul; and raiſe in it conceptions and aims above the limits of humanity. The fineſt, and, at the ſame time, moſt pleaſing ſenſations in nature, are thoſe, which, (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) carry us out of ourſelves, and bring us neareſt to that divine original from which we ſpring.

A. To this power of humanizing, if I may ſo call it, theſe Coloſſal proportions, ſucceeds that of annexing the ſublime to the moſt minute. When two ſuch extremes correſpond

correſpond in their effects, we may be aſſured, that the merit in both ſprings from the ſame cauſe, a [*b*] greatneſs of manner. The moſt celebrated inſtance in this kind, was the Hercules of Lyſippus; which, though not more than a foot in height, filled the imagination equal to the Hercules Farneſe. ——As this ſtatue is loſt, we muſt content ourſelves with the deſcription of it by Statius [*i*].

At the chaſte board the god himſelf appears,
Inſpires the artiſt; and the banquet chears;
He, only he, could teach thee to confine
A great idea to minute deſign;

[*b*] Μεγαλοτεχνον.

[*i*] Hæc inter caſtæ genius tutelaque menſæ
Amphitryoniades, &c.
——— Deus ille, Deus: Seſeque videndum
Indulſit, Lyſippe, tibi, parvuſque videri
Sentirique ingens; et cum mirabilis intra
Stet menſura pedem, tamen exclamare libebit,
(Si viſus per membra ferus) hoc pectora preſſus
Vaſtator Nemees,——&c.

Lib. iv. Sylv.

From

From part to part our heated fancy flies,
And gives to character, what ſpace denies;
Preſs'd by that arm, the lion pants for breath;
And Cacus trembles at th' impending death.

B. THE Jupiter of Phidias, and Hercules of Lyſippus are equal examples of the ſuperior genius of the Greeks; and it muſt be confeſſed, that if they have improved on nature, it was not ſo much by quitting her proportions, as excelling her ideas. When I reflect on this evident ſuperiority of the Greek artiſts over the ancient and Modern Roman, I am at a loſs to account for it: I cannot attribute it wholly to a pre-eminence of genius; being unwilling to believe, that nature could confine true taſte to ſuch narrow boundaries: And yet, if ſhe is partial to particular ages, why may not ſhe be ſo to particular climates?

A. THIS

A. THIS reflection is humbling; let us look for a ſecond cauſe. [*k*] Seneca obſerves, "That naked bodies, as they be-"tray their imperfections, ſo they give a "full exhibition of their beauties:" Each of theſe effects tends to the improvement of deſign, Cloathing on the contrary, diſguiſes beauty, and gives a protection to faults. The [*l*] Greeks, it is known, almoſt ever repreſented their figures naked. But the Romans, whoſe character was military, dreſſed theirs in armour. That art which challenges criticiſm, muſt always be ſuperior to that which ſhuns it. We are told by Pliny, [*m*] "That Praxiteles had

[*k*] Nuda corpora, vitia ſi qua ſint, non celant, nec laudes parum oſtentant. Lib. iii. Ep. 6.

[*l*] Græca res eſt nihil velare; at contra, Romana ac militaris, thoracas addere. Plin. lib. xxxiv. c. 5.

[*m*] Duas fecerat Veneres Praxiteles, ſimulque vendebat; alteram velata ſpecie, quam ob id quidem

made

" made two ſtatues of Venus, which he " ſold at the ſame time; the one clothed; " which, for that reaſon, was preferred by " the people of Cos: Thoſe of Gnidus " purchaſed that which was rejected. The " reputation of theſe ſtatues was widely " different; for by this laſt Praxiteles en- " nobled Gnidus." We may conceive then that the Greeks had the ſame advantage over the Romans, that the naked Venus had over the clothed: This advantage holds ſtill more ſtrongly againſt the moderns; who, borrowing their characters and ſubjects from a chaſte religion, are not only forced in decency to clothe their figures; but often, by propriety, to make that clothing of the coarſeſt materials. Hence it is, that we often ſee a Saint bending under a load of drapery, and the elegant form of a

prætulerunt Coi; rejectam Gnidii emerunt: Immensâ differentiâ famæ; illo enim ſigno Praxiteles nobilitavit Gnidum. Lib. xxxvi. c. 5.

nun overwhelmed in the blanketting of her order. If paint ſometimes repreſents to us the naked body of a Chriſt, it is either ſtretched on a croſs, or disfigured by ſufferings; whilſt the virgin-mother is hooded to the eyes, and the beauties of the Magdalen are abſorbed in velvet. The reſult of this habit is evident, when our firſt artiſts come to deſign the nud; a compariſon of Raphael's figures, in the incendio di Borgo, with the Laocoon or Gladiator, would have much the ſame effect, as that of a Flemiſh coach-horſe with an Arabian courſer.

B. IT may be offered in this place, that as our ſubjects ſeldom admit the nude, we are not ſuch great ſufferers by a neglect of it.

A. BUT this negligence has the worſt effects, even where it ſeems ptotected; for

we

we find, that our painters are much more happy in the diſpoſition and caſt of their draperies, than in the correctneſs of their deſign; and Raphael would not be ſo much praiſed, for giving us, in his clothed figures, a fair expreſſion of form and proportion, were not the contrary of this the general character of our painters. Theſe reflections have carried me ſomewhat wide of my ſubject; I muſt return to it.

THE deſign of the ancients is diſtinguiſhed by an union in the proportions, a ſimplicity of Contour, and excellence of character. Of the firſt I have ſaid as much as I might do, without venturing too far into the mechanic of the art: But as I have only hinted at the others, ſome more particular remarks may not be improper. There is no one excellence of deſign, from which we receive ſuch immediate pleaſure, as from a gracefulneſs of action: If we

obſerve the attitudes and movements of the Greek ſtatues, we ſhall mark that careleſs decency, and unaffected grace, which ever attend the motions and geſtures of men unconſcious of obſervation. There [*n*] is a prodigious difference, between thoſe movements which flow from nature, and thoſe which are directed by art.

THE ancients knew this well; and hence followed that ſingular ſimplicity which characteriſes their works: For, though at times, as in the Venus of Medicis, and daughters of Niobe, they riſe to an aſſumed gracefulneſs; and even profeſs a deſire to pleaſe; yet this is confin'd to ſo ſimple a contour; it is ſo little above the meaſure of ordinary action, that it appears leſs the effect of ſtudy, than the natural reſult of

[*n*] Paulùm intereſſe cenſes, ex animo omnia,
Ut fert natura, facias, an de induſtria?
Terent. And. act. iv. ſcene 5.

a ſuperior

a ſuperior character, or an habitual politeneſs.

B. RAPHAEL has, in this particular, been wonderfully happy in his imitation of the antique. The moſt courtly imagination cannot repreſent to itſelf an image of a more winning grace, than is to be ſeen in his Sancta Cæcilia: Indeed, an elegant ſimplicity is the characteriſtic of his deſign; we no where meet in him the affected contraſts of Mic. Angelo, or the ſtudied attitudes of Guido; the true difference between thoſe, may be beſt conceived, in a ſuppoſed compariſon of the real characters of the Drama, with the actors who perſonate them; in Raphael, and the antique, we ſee Alexander and Hamlet, in Mic. Angelo and Guido——And, ——

A. THOUGH in treating of grace and beauty, character, ſo far as it is determin-

ed by them, has been naturally included; yet there remains ſtill a more eſſential part; I mean, that expreſſion of a mind, conveyed in the air of the head, and intelligence of the countenance. If, in the other branches of deſign, the ancients are to be admired; in this they are wonderful. However enlightened we may be by the moſt elegant obſervance of nature, or warmed by the moſt poetic deſcriptions, the Belvedere Apollo, and daughter of Niobe ſtill give us new ideas of nobleneſs, energy, and beauty. The ſtatuaries of Greece, were not mere mechanicks; men of education and literature, they were more the companions than ſervants of their employers: Their taſte was refined by the converſation of courts, and enlarged by the lecture of their poets: Accordingly, the ſpirit of their ſtudies breathes through their works. We ſee no ſuch influence in the productions of the moderns; their greateſt merit

merit is a ſervile imitation of the antique; the moment they loſe ſight of them they are loſt. In the elegant, they are little; in the great, charged; character they have none; their beauty is the reſult of meaſure, not idea: And if, miſtaking extravagance for ſpirit, they aim at the ſublime, it ends in the bluſterings of Bernini, or caricatures of Michael Angelo.

B. FROM all that you have offered on the deſign of the ancients, we may define grace to be the moſt pleaſing conceivable action, expreſſed with the utmoſt ſimplicity each occaſion will admit of.

A. SO far as a definition of Grace can go, yours gives a juſt idea of it; for, it implies the higheſt degree of elegance in the choice; of propriety in the application; and of eaſe in the execution: You rightly term it an action, for there is no grace

without motion. Thus, Milton diſtinguiſhes it from beauty.

Grace was in all her ſteps, heav'n in her eye.

Venus was but gueſſed at by her beauty; ſhe was known by her motions ——— *Vera inceſſu patuit Dea.*——But, the perfection of Grace is, when it becomes [*o*] characteriſtick; and marks ſome amiable emotion in the mind. Such, we may preſume, was the excellence of Apelles [*p*];

[*o*] Let us unite to theſe amiable expreſſions, a becoming air of the head, flexure of the body, and an elegant diſpoſition of the limbs, we ſhall then have a clear conception of that correggieſque Grace, which it has ſo much puzzled our writers to explain. I have in my poſſeſſion an excellent copy of the St. Jerome of Correggio, where one may ſee in the Angel, the Madonna, the Chriſt, and the Magdalen, ſo many diſtinct examples of this idea.

[*p*] Præcipua Apellis in arte venuſtas fuit, cum eadem ætate maximi pictores eſſent; quorum opera cum admiraretur, collaudatis omnibus, deeſſe iis unam

who,

"who, living at the ſame time with ſome "of the greateſt painters; after he had "ſeen and admired their ſeveral works, "declared, that the only thing wanting in "them was Grace; that they poſſeſſed "every other excellence; but in this, he "ſaw no one equal to himſelf."

B. THE teſtimonies which you produce from their writings; but above all, the Greek ſtatues, which we may look upon as living witneſſes, ſufficiently prove the merit of the ancients. Let us now, if you pleaſe, conſider that of the moderns: Thus, eſtabliſhing a general idea of compariſon between the two, we ſhall have a more perfect one of both. I do not mean to lead you into a detail of the perfections or imperfections of our different artiſts; it will

illam Venerem dicebat, quam Græci Χαρίλα vocant; cætera omnia contigiſſe, ſed hac ſoli ſibi neminem parem. Plin. lib. xxxv. c. 10.

be

be ſufficient to throw the merit of the cauſe upon ſome one, who is generally allowed to be the moſt excellent.

A. THERE is no difficulty in our choice: I ſhall lay before you the reflections I have made on the deſign of Raphael; with this latitude, that you may admit or reject them as they happen to ſquare with your own; for, this ſhould always be the caſe, where we profeſs to have no other guide but feeling; and to form our judgment merely from effects. ——

THE deſign of Raphael was, in its beginnings, dry, but correct; he enlarged it much on ſeeing the drawings of Michael Angelo: Of too juſt an eye to give intirely into the exceſſes of his model, he ſtruck out a middle ſtyle; which, however, was not ſo happily blended, nor ſo perfectly original, as quite to throw off influence

of the extremes: Hence, in the great, he is too apt to ſwell into the charged; in the delicate, to drop into the little.—His deſign, notwithſtanding, is beautiful; but never arrived to that perfection, which we diſcover in the Greek ſtatues. He is excellent in the characters of Philoſophers, Apoſtles, and the like; but the figures of his women have not that elegance, which is diſtinguiſhed in the Venus of Medicis, or the daughter of Niobe; in theſe, his convex Contours have a certain heavineſs, which, when he ſeeks to avoid, he falls into a dryneſs ſtill leſs pardonable.

B. YET his proportions are eſteemed excellent; and their ſymmetry ſuch, as to give to his figures an effect beyond the promiſe of their ſtature.

A. It

A. IT is true, but yet, not having formed his manner on the moſt beautiful antique, we do not ſee in him that elegance in the proportions, that freedom in the joints, which lend all their motion to the Laocoon and Gladiator. Inſtead of theſe, the figures of Michael Angelo were his models in the great ſtyle; whence, in his convex Contour, having quitted the lines of nature, and not having ſubſtituted thoſe of ideal beauty, he became too like his original; as may be ſeen in his Incendio di Borgo. Would you therefore place Raphael in his true point of view, you muſt obſerve him in the middle age; in old men; or, in the nervous nature: In his Madonna's, he knew very well how to chooſe, as likewiſe how to vary the moſt beautiful parts in nature: But, he knew not, like the Greek ſtatuaries, how to expreſs a beauty ſuperior to the natural. Thus,

in

in his Galatea, at the palace Chigi, where he has [q] profeſſedly attempted a character of perfect beauty, he has fallen ſhort of the beauty of his Madonna's: The cauſe of which ſeems to me to be this, that, in the former, he drew after his own ideas, which were imperfect; in the latter, he copied beautiful nature, which was almoſt perfect. I am confirmed in this opinion by a ſecond oſervation: Of all the objects of paint, Angels call moſt for ideal beauty; thoſe of Raphael, are by no means diſtinguiſhed in this particular; for, he had no examples for them in nature, but was

[q] In a letter to the count Baldaſſar Caſtiglione, he ſpeaks of his Galatea in the following words: "Della "Galatea, mi terrei un gran maeſtro, ſe vi foſſero la "metà delle tante coſe, che V. S. mi ſcrive: E le "dico, che per dipingere una bella, mi biſognaria "veder piu belle: Ma eſſendo careſtia di belle donne, "io mi ſervo di certa idea, che mi viene alla mente. "Se queſta hâ in ſe alcuna eccellenza d'arte, io non "ſo: Ben mi affatico di averla."

obliged to draw them from his own imagination.

B. Accordingly, he has given them a motion, ſpirit, and expreſſion, for which he could have no example.

A. TRUE; but theſe do not conſtitute beauty, which is our preſent object: On the contrary, in Raphael they often counteract it: Thus, in the heads of his Madonna's, the noſe is generally too large; he thought, no doubt, that this gave more meaning and ſenſibility to the face. In the ſame manner, his men, of the middle and advanced age, have their features too ſtrongly marked; the muſcles, particularly thoſe of the lips and eye-brows, are charged: It is plain, that he preferred this form, becauſe, by it, he could more eaſily expreſs the ſeveral emotions of the mind. But, the perfection of an art, is, to unite the juſteſt

juſteſt expreſſions to the fineſt forms. The Belvedere Apollo, and the daughter of Niobe, are the ſtandards of beauty; what energy, what a divine expreſſion is there in the one? what diſtreſs, what an affecting ſenſibility in the other? There are few expreſſions (if we except thoſe, which excite in the beholders either hatred or contempt) which may not be more happily marked in a fine countenance, than in ſuch as are ill-favoured; where the features are charged, the ſlighteſt movements throw them into forcible expreſſions; the conſequences of which are, that the finer ſymptoms of paſſion are in a great meaſure loſt; and the ſtronger ones loſe much of their force, by the facility with which they are expreſſed: But, in a face naturally beautiful and compoſed, not only the degrees of paſſion are traced with delicacy; but, the violent agitations of the ſoul, affect us more ſenſibly, by the total diſturbance and alteration which they

they produce in the countenance. This idea will always have a great effect on the intelligent obſerver; and, in proportion as the execution is more difficult, it will do more honour to the artiſt. I muſt add to theſe remarks, that, excluſive of the force which beauty gives to expreſſions in general, there are ſome, which cannot well exiſt without it: Thus, if dignity, courage, love, or joy be thrown into a charged or ill-favoured countenance, they grow into an extremity, by which they loſe their very eſſence; and are transformed into pride, fierceneſs, luſt and grimace. You are not to ſuppoſe, that in the caſes above-mentiontioned, I always ſpeak of either abſolute beauty, or abſolute deformity; there are degrees in both; and the judgment of the artiſt conſiſts, in proportioning thoſe degrees to the ſeveral occaſions.

B. THIS,

B. THIS is, to turn a pleaſing art into an uſeful ſcience; and to make every picture a ſchool of virtue. But yet, I cannnot forgive you, the having reduced the deſign of Raphael, ſo much below the ſtandard, at which it is generally placed.

A. THE judicious Pouſſin has gone much farther than I have done, or even than he had a right to go; when he affirmed, that Raphael among the moderns was an angel, but, that compared with the ancients, he was an aſs. This is too much; however, it ſerves to ſhow how ſenſibly this painter felt the difference that was between them. But, ſetting aſide theſe compariſons our purpoſe is to come at a ſettled idea of the moſt perfect deſign: What is it to us, whether the examples were produced two thouſand, or two hundred years ago? A man of taſte, like the philoſopher, ſhould

be a citizen of the world, acknowledge merit wherever he meets it, indifferent whether it ſhines forth in a Raphael or Apelles, in a Michael Angelo or Glycon.

B. You have advanced, that the greateſt excellence of deſign was grace; whence is it then, that Correggio, who, in this is inimitable, is, by many, placed ſo low in the claſs of Deſigners?

A. THIS ariſes from a want of attention to the character and purſuits of this amiable painter. His conſtant aim was grace: And a happy effect of clear obſcure: A waving and varied Contour was neceſſary to this end; Hence, he gave wholly into the ſerpentine, ſtudiouſly avoiding right lines, and acute angles, as too ſimple in their effects. [*r*] Thus the habit, and even ne-

[*r*] Nullum ſine venia placuit ingenium: Da mihi quemcumque vis magni nominis virum, dicam illi quid

ceſſity of continually varying his out line, threw him into little errors in drawing, which ſpring not, as ſome think, from an ignorance of this branch of his art, but from a predilection for another; and, there are few, I believe, who would wiſh thoſe inadvertencies away, accompanied with the charms which gave occaſion to them.

B. IT is a diſpute among the critics, whether he ever ſaw or imitated the antique.

A. THIS diſpute is his greateſt praiſe; for, they who ſuppoſe he did, cannot otherwiſe account for the general beauty,

aetas ſua ignoverit, quid in illo ſciens diſſimulaverit: Multos dabo, quibus vitia non nocuerint; quoſdam, quibus proſuerint; quos, ſi quis corrigit, delet: Sic enim vitia virtutibus immiſta ſunt, ut illas ſecum tractura ſint. Sen. Ep. cxiv.

and elegance of his deſign: While thoſe who are of a contrary opinion, grounded on imperfect relations of his life, or the lapſes and unſteadineſs of his pencil, are forced to impute that beauty and elegance to a pure ſtrength of genius. Certainly, his manner ſeems to have in it all the warmth of invention, as it has a certain boldneſs, ſuperior to imitation, and productive of uncommon graces. Upon the whole, I think, we may affirm of his deſign, where it is not ſacrificed to his more favourite aims, that it is often maſterly, and always pleaſing; a quality, rarely met with in thoſe ſervile and unideal painters, who think they have attained every perfection, if they keep within the rules of drawing; "[s] with theſe, leanneſs paſſes for

[s] Macies illis pro ſanitate, et judicii loco infirmitas eſt; et dum ſatis putant vitio carere, in

"health,

"health, and weakneſs for judgment; "and, while they think it ſufficient "to be free from faults, they fall in- "to that capital fault, the want of "beauties."

id ipſum incidunt vitium, quod virtutibus carent. Quint. xii. 4.

DIALOGUE V.

Of COLOURING.

A. SHOULD the moſt able maſter in deſign, attempt to repreſent, by that alone, a roſe or grape, we ſhould have but a faint and imperfect image; let him add to each its proper colours, we no longer doubt; we ſmell the roſe, we touch the grape; hence the poet [*t*]:

So glow'd the grape, ſo perfect the deceit,
My hand reach'd forward, ere I found the cheat.

It ſeems then, that the firſt gives a general idea; the ſecond a particular exiſtence. It was this, no doubt, that induced Plutarch

[*t*] Μικρου κατεσχον τον βοτρυν τοις δακτυλοις,
Ὑπεραπατηθεις τῃ θεᾳ των χρωματων.

to affirm, "[u] that in painting, we are "more ſtruck by colouring than drawing, "by reaſon of its ſimilitude and deception:" And another obſerves, "[x] That "the painter may deſign the outlines and "proportions of a man, but it is by co-"louring, that he brings it to repreſent a "Socrates or Plato." The ancients were not contented with attributing to colours the power of realizing objects; they make them to be their chief ornament, the very ſoul of beauty: [y] Thus Tully, "There "is in the body a certain harmony of pro-"portions, united to the charm of colour-"ing, and this is called beauty. An au-

[u] Εν γραφαις κινηλικωτερον εστι χρωμα γραμμης, δια το ανδρεικελον και απαθηλον. De Poetis aud.

[x] Ο ζωγραφος ποιει προτον κοινον ανθρωπον εν σκιαγραφια, ειτα χρωματιζων αγει εις το ποιησαι Σωκρατην, η Πλατωνα. Ammonius in x. Categ. Ariſtot.

[y] Corporis eſt quædam apta figura membrorum, cum coloris quadam ſuavitate, eaque dicitur pulchritudo.

" thor, of no leſs authority, obſerves; [z] " that ſuch a body may be deemed truly " beautiful, in which a temperate and " pure blood fills the limbs, and ſwells " the muſcles, ſpreading through the whole " a ruddy tinge and glow of beauty." Hence it was, that a Grecian lady of admired taſte, being aſked, which was the fineſt colour in nature, anſwered, the bluſh of an ingenuous and beautiful youth.

B. You need not draw all your examples from antiquity: Whatever rank our painters may hold, we have Titians in our poets. —Obſerve how Shakeſpear pencils:

'Tis beauty truly blent, whoſe red and white
Natures own ſweet and cunning hand laid on.

[z] In quo temperatus ac bonus ſanguis implet membra, et exſurgit toris; ipſos quoque nervos rubore tegit, ac decore commendat. De cauſ. corrupt. eloq. c. 21.

And

And Fletcher, who excels in the deſcription of beauty and its effects;

Have I not receiv'd
A lady to my bed, that in her eye
Keeps mounting fire, and on her tender cheeks
Inevitable colour? Maid's Tragedy.

Thus too our divine Milton:

To whom the angel, with a ſmile that glow'd
Celeſtial roſy red, Love's proper hue.

Such as theſe may be truly called colours dipped in heaven; and, a fine complexion, in the language of a poet, is the die of Love: Certainly it gives a wonderful effect to beauty; it is a hint of ſomething more than human; it comes forth as the emanation of an intrinſic purity and lovelineſs, and diffuſes through the human form a tinge of the angelic nature.

A. You

A. You paint it like one who had felt its power. The influence, indeed, of this ſpecies of beauty, which is the reſult of colours, ſeems to be univerſal; and to extend to all beings capable of love. But (if we may credit the nice obſervers of nature) it is in none more remarkable than in birds [*a*];

Thro' the bright flocks the cautious wooer flies,
Dwells on each ſpot, and notes their various dies:
Foe to a ſtranger love, he yields alone
To kindred tints, and beauties like his own.

B. I ſhall wiſh hence forward to underſtand the language of a goldfinch; what a pleaſure would it be, to hear the male warbling forth,

[*a*] —— —— Agmina late
Fœminea explorat cautus, maculaſque requirit
Cognatas, paribuſque interlita corpora guttis.
Spect. N°. 412.

Urit

Urit me Glyceræ nitor,
Et vultus nimium lubricus aſpici.

A. THE open was palpable, and your raillery is perfectly fair. But, to return to our ſubject; whatever may be the influence of colours on other beings, we can have no doubt of it in ourſelves; inſomuch, that irregular, and even ordinary features, ſhall often, by the mere luſtre of red and white, overbear the power of the moſt perfect ſymmetry.

WE are not to wonder therefore, that the poets, hurrying over the other circumſtances of beauty, dwell with ſo much pleaſure upon this. Thus the elegant Tibullus [*b*],

[*b*] Candor erat, qualem præfert Latonia Luna,
Et color in niveo corpore purpureus.
Ut Iuveni primum virgo deducta marito,
Inficitur teneras ore rubente genas;

Such

Such a mix'd whiteneſs ſpreads the doubtful moon
So thro' his ſnowy ſkin the ſcarlet ſhone;
Thus, ting'd in bluſhes, moves the conſcious maid
With ſtep ſuſpended to the nuptial bed:
Thus intermix'd with lilies breathes the roſe,
And ripening apple with vermilion glows.

Statius on a ſimilar occaſion is more warm, and kindles almoſt to extravagance [*c*];

Stripp'd of his garments, with a ſudden bound
He ſtarts to view, and dealt a brightneſs round;
His poliſh'd limbs, and glowing breaſt diſplay
Beauties, that gladden like the ſpring of day;
Thro' his whole frame diffus'd, our eyes may trace
The kindred bluſh and ſplendor of his face.

Et cum contexunt amaranthis alba puellæ
Lilia, et autumno candida mala rubent.
Lib. iii. Eleg. 4.

[*c*] Emicat, et torto chlamydem diffibulat auro.
Effulſere artus, membrorumque omnis aperta eſt
Lætitia, inſigneſque humeri, nec pectora nudis
Deteriora genis, latuitque in corpore vultus.
Theb. lib. vi.

If

If the poets conſidered colouring as the chief beauty in nature; it is no wonder, that painters, whoſe art is an imitation of nature, ſhould make it the great object of their ſtudy. Accordingly, Parrhaſius, Zeuxis, and Apelles, the moſt celebrated painters, were at the ſame time, the moſt excellent colouriſts. If we examine the praiſes beſtowed on the laſt of them, we ſhall find, that they turn chiefly on that truth and beauty, which are the gift of colours: The maſter-piece of this painter, and conſequently of the art itſelf, was his Venus anadyomene. Tully thus marks its perfections, [*d*] "In the Coan Venus, that is "not real body, but the reſemblance of a "body: Nor is that ruddineſs, ſo diffuſed "and blended with white, real blood, but

[*d*] In Venere Coa, corpus illud non eſt, ſed ſimile corpori; nec ille fuſus et candore mixtus rubor, ſanguis eſt, ſed quædam ſanguinis ſimilitudo. De nat. Deor. lib. i.

"a certain

"a certain reſemblance of blood." Ovid alludes to this ſame tenderneſs and warmth of pencil [*d*].

In graceful act her ſea-wet locks compreſs'd,
Send the quick drops which trickle down her breaſt,
O'er her bright ſkin the melting bubbles ſpread,
And clothe her beauties in a ſofter ſhade.

[*e*] Apelles a little before his death attempted a ſecond Venus, which was to have ex-

[*d*] Sic madidos ſiccat digitis Venus uda capillos,
Et modo maternis tecta videtur aquis.
Lib. xi. Triſt.

To the ſame purpoſe the epigrammatiſt Auſonius,
Ut complexa manu madidos ſalis æquore crines,
Humidulis ſpumas ſtringit utraque comis.

[*e*] Apelles Veneris caput, et ſumma pectoris politiſſima arte perfecit: Reliquam pratem corporis inchoatam reliquit. Lib. i. Ep. 9.

Nemo pictor eſt inventus, qui Veneris eam partem, quam Apelles inchoatam reliquiſſet, abſolveret; oris enim pulchritudo, reliqui corporis imitandi ſpem auferebat. De Officiis, lib. iii.

ceeded

ceeded the firſt; but died, juſt as he had finiſhed the head and breaſts. We are told, that no painter could be prevailed on to complete this figure; the idea, the character, the ſtyle of deſign were determined; it ſhould ſeem then, that what they dreaded, was, a compariſon of their tints with his. It is certain, the reputation of this painter was not owing to great compoſitions; many of his moſt celebrated works were [*f*] ſingle figures, and, ſome of them, painted from the life; a practice, which naturally produces, as is proved in Titian, an excellency in colouring; as this is only to be learnt, by an accurate and diligent obſervance of the mixed and ſubtile tints in nature. Accordingly, Pliny tells

[*f*] Fecit Apelles Antigonum thoracatum, cum equo incedentem: Peritiores artis præferunt omnibus ejus operibus eundem regem ſedentem equo. Alexandrum et Philippum quoties pinxerit, enumerare ſupervacuum eſt. Plin. xxxv. 10.

us,

us, that he [*g*] "painted a hero naked, in "which he challenged nature herſelf." But, above all, Propertius pays him the prettieſt compliment, and, at the ſame time, gives us the juſteſt notion of his merit, when, diſſuading his miſtreſs from the uſe of paint, he recommends to her to truſt to her real complexion; which he compares to the [*b*] native carnation of Apelles. ——

[*g*] Pinxit et heroa nudum; eâque picturâ naturam ipſam provocavit. Lib. xxxv. 10.

[*b*] The common objection to the colouring of Apelles, is, that he uſed but four colours: For this we have the authority of Pliny, who, at the ſame time, names the colours, viz. black, white, red and yellow. Now, as it does not ſeem poſſible to form a perfect carnation from theſe, we muſt either ſuppoſe that Pliny was miſtaken, or, that the praiſes beſtowed on the colouring of Apelles, by all the beſt judges of antiquity, and by Pliny himſelf among the reſt, were not juſt. There is a paſſage in Cicero, which, I think, clears this difficulty, and proves that Pliny was miſtaken; it is as follows: Similis in pictura ratio eſt, in

Qualis Apelleis eſt color in tabulis.

Thus making it a merit in nature, to riſe to a competition with art. By attempting to prove that colouring was the great excellence of Apelles, it muſt not be inferred from hence, that he was wanting in the other parts: The age in which he lived, was diſtinguiſhed above all thoſe before and after, by a perfection in deſign; a weakneſs therefore in this, would not have paſſed uncenſured in ſo capital a painter. The reſemblance, likewiſe, in the praiſes beſtowed on him, with thoſe, which, in later times have been attributed to Correggio,

qua Zeuxim, et Polygnotum, et Timentem, et eorum, qui non ſunt uſi plus quatuor coloribus, *formas* et *lineamenta* laudamus. At in Aëtione, Nicomacho, Protogene et Apelle, jam perfecta ſunt omnia. Thus, thoſe who uſed but four colours, are praiſed for their *proportions* and *characters* only; but, Apelles is diſtinguiſhed from them, and declared to be perfect in every branch of his art. The inference is obvious.

the great maſter in the clear obſcure, gives juſt reaſon to ſuppoſe, that he was in this particular, equal, if not ſuperior to any of his time. I would recommend this to the obſervation of thoſe, who, on a compariſon of modern with ancient painting, are ſo ready to ſuppoſe the advantage on the ſide of the former; as I do likewiſe all that I have offered on the character of Apelles, to thoſe ſanguine admirers of the Roman School, who conſider colouring as a kind of ſuperfluity in paint. Having thus far ſhewn the merit of colouring, ſo far as it is productive of truth and beauty; you may expect I ſhould ſay ſomething of a branch much cultivated and admired by the moderns; I mean that harmony and tone, which ſpring from a happy diſpoſition of variegated draperies: A perfect knowledge of the union and oppoſition of colours, together with the effects of their different ſhades and reflections, requires,

no

no doubt, great ſtudy and practice; but I apprehend, that too great an attention to this flattery of the eye, has often made our moderns neglectful of the more eſſential parts. That this was the caſe in the inferior æra of ancient painting, we have the authority of Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus: "[*i*] The "paintings of the ancients, (ſays he) were "ſimple and unvaried in their colouring; "but correct in their drawing; and diſtin-"guiſhed by their elegance: Thoſe which "ſucceeded, leſs correct in drawing, were "more finiſhed, more varied in their lights "and ſhades; truſting their effects to the "multitude of their colours." You will obſerve, that this boaſted ſcience of the moderns, was, to the ancients, a ſymptom

[*i*] Αρχαιαι γραφαι χρωμασιν ειργασμεναι ἁπλως, και ουδεμιαν εν τοις μιγμασιν εχουσαι ποικιλιαν, ακριβεις δε ταις γραμμαις, και πολυ το χαριεν εν ταυταις εχουσαι· Αἱ δε μετ' εκεινας, ευγραμμοι μεν ἠτον, εξειργασμεναι δε μαλλον, σκιᾳ τε και φωτι ποικιλλομεναι, και εν τῳ των μιγματων πληθει την ισχυν εχουσαι. Dion. Hal. in Iſæo, p. 167. ed. Oxon.

of the decay of paint: And indeed, can the happieſt effect in this kind, that ever flowed from the pencil of Titian, make us amends for his frequent errors in drawing, or poverty of character? Can the beſt painted drapery of a Carrache, or Guido, balance the want of grace and beauty in the one, of warmth and expreſſion in the other? Apelles ſeeing a Helen, that had been painted by one of his ſcholars, loaded with ornaments: Cried out, [*k*] "So, young man! not "able to paint her beautiful, thou haſt "made her fine." When I reflect on the authority of the writers, and the agreement of their notions on the ſubject of colouring, I am inclined to believe, that the ancients were equal, if not ſuperior to the moderns in the moſt eſſential parts: I ſhould lay little ſtreſs on general praiſes, or the extra-

[*k*] Ω μειρακιον, μη δυναμενος γραψαι καλην, πλουσιαν πεποιηκας.

vagance

vangance of admiration; becauſe, it is natural to us to praiſe the beſt we know: But, when I meet with diſtinctions, which mark the degrees of perfection, and with effects, which can proceed but from the Higheſt, I can no longer doubt. I ſhall offer you an inſtance in each kind, which ſtrike me as deciſive. Parrhaſius and Euphranor had each painted a Theſeus; "[*l*] Euphra-"nor objected to his rival, that his Theſeus "looked as if he had fed on roſes, his own "as if he had fed on fleſh." What more could we ſay of Titian and Barocci? Yet, this ſlight and florid ſtyle, was not the conſtant manner of Parrhaſius; Pliny tells us, that he painted two warriors, one of which ruſhing to the battle ſeemed to ſweat; the other, ſtripped of his armour, was ſeen to

[*l*] Ευφρανωρ τον Θησεα τον ἑαυτου, τῳ Παρρασιου παρεβαλε· λεγων, τον μεν εκεινου ῥοδα βεβρωκεναι, τον δε ἑαυτου κρεα βοεια. Plutarch. Bellone an pace clariores fuerint Athenienſes.

pant. What a warmth, what a tenderneſs of pencil? Can paint expreſs that melting diffuſion, that dewy moiſture, which ſprings from a quickening perſpiration? The melloweſt tints of the Venetian ſchool furniſh no ſuch ideas. Our notions of excellence are too much limited by our experience; had we never ſeen better colouring than that of the Galatea of Raphael, a deſcription of the Venus of Titian would paſs for extravagant. Why might not the Greek ſchool have been as far ſuperior to the Venetian, as this is to the Roman? We will now purſue the ſame method we propoſed before, and conſider the colouring of the moderns in their greateſt maſter Titian.

B. THOUGH I confeſs this was the rule propoſed, yet, I muſt take the liberty to break in upon it, and to beg, that you would firſt give your opinion of the colouring of Raphael.

THE

THE advances of ſuch a painter in every branch of his art, are worthy our obſervation; particularly too, as I find the critics much divided on this point, ſome holding him to be an excellent, others an indifferent colouriſt.

A. RAPHAEL, at his ſetting, out, had no other guide than his own genius; as, the painters his predeceſſors, could furniſh him with no examples to imitate. After ſome time, he learnt from Fra. Bartholomeo a better ſtyle; his touch became more vigorous, his colouring grew warmer, and he finiſhed leſs; yet, he ſtill preſerved too great a ſameneſs; and all his perſonages had the ſame brown and duſky complexion. He perſiſted a long time in this taſte; and, one may venture to affirm, that he never wholly abandoned it. In his picture of the diſpute of the ſacrament, which is the beſt

coloured of all his works in freſco, one diſcovers a difference between the carnation of his angels and men; — ſuch a circumſtance would not be remarked in our beſt colourifts; who preſerve this diſtinction, not only in different beings, but likewiſe in the different ſexes and ages. In the St. Jerome of Correggio, the complexion of the ſaint, the angel, the child, the mother, and the Magdalen, are all varied, agreeable to their different ages, natures, and characters. In his ſchool of Athens, Raphael was more bold, and leſs finiſhed; and, changing ſtill his manner in the Heliodorus, he painted in a ſtyle more free and varied; though yet, in the delicate, he was ſhort of perfection. At length, his paſſion for deſign, made him negligent of colouring; as we ſee in the Incendio di Borgo. About this time, he began to paint with leſs diligence; and having eſtabliſhed his character, left much to his ſcholars; till at length, finding his reputation

putation diminiſhed, he determined to re-eſtabliſh it, by exerting his whole ſkill and knowledge in his transfiguration. The colouring of this is eſteemed good; yet, from that quality or ſameneſs, which I noticed before, his fleſh is ſtill hard and dry. His demitints were compoſed merely of lights and ſhades, whence they retained always a greyiſh and duſky caſt; and, whereas, a fine and delicate ſkin, has a greater variety of tints, than the groſs; Raphael, not poſſeſſing this variety, his carnations are generally coarſe and denſe. We muſt obſerve in this place, that the paintings of Raphael in freſco, are better coloured than thoſe in oil: As the firſt was his favourite practice, he left the ſecond moſtly to his ſcholars, particularly to Julio Romano; contenting himſelf with retouching and finiſhing: For this reaſon, we cannot ſo well judge of his paintings in oil: In which, ſuch as we ſee them, he is much inferior, with reſpect to colouring,

colouring, to Correggio and Titian; but, in freſco, he is ſuperior to all.

B. YOUR obſervations on the failings of Raphael, will be as ſhades to the merit and beauty of Titian.

A. PORTRAIT painting has all along been the favourite practice of the Venetian ſchool. This conſtant imitation of nature, has led them into the knowledge of thoſe various tints, by which ſhe at once diſtinguiſhes, and expreſſes the different carnations. To deſcribe, what colours, or mixtures of them, produce thoſe various appearances, is the mechanic part of the art; our ſubject is the ideal. We may compare, or determine the degrees of merit in the beſt painters, without following minutely their mechanic proceſs; I can affirm, for inſtance, without danger of being contradicted, that Correggio has not the tenderneſs or delicacy of

Titian: His fleſh is too firm; the ſkin too much ſtretched; the humid of our compoſition is not ſufficiently marked. An artiſt might tell us, that theſe defects proceed from a colouring too yellow or red; from demitints too much verging on the green; whereas, nature, and the paintings of Titian, prove, that, in clear and tranſparent ſkins, the humid ever produces a bluiſh caſt.

BUT, to leave this matter to thoſe whoſe province it is. I ſhall content myſelf, in this place, with obſerving, that in colouring, [*m*] Titian, of all the moderns, comes the neareſt to nature, and of courſe to perfection. To enlarge more particularly on his merit, would be but a repetition of the

[*m*] Might I preſume to cenſure the colouring of Titian in any particular, it would be in this, that his male and female tints (if I may ſo call them) are not ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed: They are both extremely tender and animated, but, the colouring in his women is too vigorous and maſculine.

remarks,

remarks which I have already offered on the colouring of the ancients: Let us apply thoſe remarks to his works, they will reciprocally illuſtrate each other.

B. I AM ſenſible, from the nature of the ſubject, as likewiſe from what you have already touched on, that a more minute examination of this matter would embarraſs us in the mechanic. You have ſatisfied me, how far colouring is an aid to beauty, and neceſſary to truth: You have ſhewn, how highly it was eſteemed by the critics, how induſtriouſly cultivated by the artiſts of antiquity. By marking the failings of Raphael, and proportioning the merit of Corregio, you have led me into a feeling of the mellow and tender tints of Titian. It would be unreaſonable to exact more from you on this point; but there is another, on which I muſt beg you to be more explicit; I mean the general tone or harmony of colours; in

which, you juſt now ſuppoſed the moderns to be much ſuperior to the ancients.

A. MY ſuppoſition was grounded on the obſcurity of their writers, and the difference of their practice. The ancients verſed in the nude, derived from this, as I have before obſerved, their elegance and correctneſs in deſign. They were no leſs indebted to it, for their truth and beauty of colouring. The moderns, on the other hand, particularly the Venetians, accuſtomed to clothe their figures, in velvet, ſilks, woolen, linen and the like, were naturally led into an obſervance of the different [*n*] effects of their

[*n*] We may form a general idea of the various effects of reflections from the following examples: If a blue be reflected on a yellow, the latter becomes greeniſh; if on a red, the red becomes purple; and ſo on through a variety of combinations: And as the white is of a nature to receive all the colours, and to be tinged with that of each reflection, the painter muſt be careful how his carnations may be affected by the ſeveral reflections.

reflections;

reflections: as, of the accord or diſagreement in their appoſition. In order to be convinced, that this accord or diſagreement is not fantaſtical, we need but obſerve the rainbow in its full diſplay of colours; at which time, their union is perfect: Let the red, the blue, or yellow diſappear, it is entirely diſturbed. In the ſame manner, place green and yellow or yellow and red together in a picture, they are evidently at variance; let the blue interpoſe, their correſpondence is reſtored. Rubens has painted in imitation of the rainbow; all the colours co-operate; the effect is good but accidental; but, in Titian and Correggio, this arrangement is the reſult of ſcience, it is a harmony, which ſprings from a judicious and happy union of conſenting colours.

B. IT ſhould ſeem that the Mexicans were great maſters of this harmony or correſpondence of colours, of which, Antonio de

de Solis, the elegant author of the Conqueſt of Mexico, gives the following remarkable inſtance. "Among the preſents ſent to "Cortez from the emperor, was a quanti- "ty of plumes and other curioſities, made "of feathers; whoſe beauty and natural "variety of colours found on rare birds "that country produces, they ſo placed and "mixed with wonderful art, diſtributing "the ſeveral colours, and ſhadowing the "light with the dark ſo exactly, that, with- "out making uſe of artificial colours, or "of the pencil, they could draw pictures, "and would undertake to imitate nature.

"IN another place, Montezuma is de- "ſcribed ſeated on a chair of burniſhed "gold, which glittered through the vari- "ous works of feathers, placed in hand- "ſome proportion about, the nice diſtri- "bution of which, in ſome meaſure, ſeem- "ed to outvie the coſt of the metal."

A. THE example you have produced in the practice of the Mexicans, is an extraordinary inſtance of the happy effect from an union of colours; and it is probable that their artiſts were, in this particular, nothing inferior to the Italians. Their ſkill, in waving thoſe various colours into a kind of feathered tapeſtry, or Moſaick, and forming in them regular pictures, and lively imitations of nature, far exceeds the deſcriptions we meet with, of the Babylonian tiſſues: As, in their painted language, they evidently reſemble, and ſeem to have excelled the hieroglyphicks of the Egyptians.

B. WHEN we meet with ſuch ſtrokes of reſemblance in the efforts of human wit, among nations cut off from all intercourſe with each other, we are moved with a kind of pleaſing ſurpriſe; ſome treat them as the inventions of hiſtorians; others account for

for them by ſuppoſed, though undiſcovered, communications; and yet, to conſider things juſtly, nothing can be more natural; the ſeeds of ingenuity, like thoſe of good ſenſe, are ſown in all ſoils; and it is no more extraordinary, that their productions ſhould be alike, than, that the oranges of New-Spain ſhould reſemble thoſe of Old.

DIALOGUE VI.

Of the CLEAR OBSCURE.

A. [*o*] I AM perſuaded, that notwithſtanding all the pains you have taken, to form a juſt idea of the Clear obſcure, from the writings of Vaſari, Felibian, and the reſt, you will agree with me, that you have more ſatisfaction in this matter, from a ſingle glance at a picture of Correggio, than from all you have ever read on that ſubject. Whether this proceeds from a want of knowledge in thoſe writers, or our ignorance of the mechanic of the art, which they are ſo apt to confound with the ideal,

[*o*] Tandem ſeſe ars ipſa diſtinxit, et invenit lumen atque umbras, differentiâ colorum alterna vice ſeſe excitante. Plin. lib. XXXV. c. 5.

I ſhall

I ſhall not take upon me to determine: But, certain it is, had we not before our eyes the examples to which they refer us, we ſhould be often at a loſs for their meaning. Now, in treating of the Clear obſcure of the ancients, we have neither the works [*p*] nor writings of their painters to guide us. Happily, their claſſic authors, men of parts and erudition, were univerſally admirers of this art. Hence their frequent alluſions to it; their metaphors borrowed from it; with the deſcriptions of particular paintings, and their effects. In theſe laſt we cannot be deceived; like effects, in picture, as in nature, muſt proceed from uniform cauſes: And when

[*p*] I do not mention in this place the paintings found at Herculaneum, becauſe I cannot look on them as of a claſs to reſt on them the merits of the ancient artiſts. There are beauties, it is true, ſcattered throughout them; but, they are the beauties *morientis artis*, of an art in its decline; ſuch as Pliny deſcribes it to have been in his time; when, as he feelingly laments, there was *nulla nobilis pictura*.

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we find these to correspond exactly with our own observations on the works of the moderns, this analogy leads us into a certainty, as to the similitude of the means by which they were produced.

B. SUCH inferences as these, when they are natural and unforced, are more conclusive than positive assertions; for we are more apt to be deceived by authority, than by the reason of things.

A. [q] "LONGINUS observes, that, if we "place in parallel lines, on the same plane, "a bright and an obscure colour, the for-"mer springs forward, and appears much "nearer to the eye." Hence we may remark, that when painters would give a pro-

[q] Επι του αυτου κειμενων επιπεδου παραλληλων ω χρωμασι της σκιας τε και φωτος, ὁμως προυπαντα τε το φως τοις ὀψεσι, και ου μονον εξοχον, αλλα και εγγυτερω παρα πολυ φαινεται. Longinus, sect. xviii.

jection

jection to any part of a figure, as the breasts of a virgin, and the like, they throw its extremities into shade; that these retiring from the eye, the intermediate parts may have their just relief. From this simple law of nature, springs all the magic of the Clear obscure; not only parts are distinguished, but intire figures are detached from their fond; seem surrounded by air; and meet the imagination with all the energy of life. Thus Philostratus prettily describes the picture of a Venus: "[r] The "goddess will not seem to be painted, but "springs from the canvass, as if she would "be pursued." The same writer tells us, that Zeuxis, Polygnotus, and Euphranor, were, above all things, [s] attentive, to shade happily, and animate their figures;

[r] Ου βουλεται γεγραφθαι δοκειν η θεος, εκκειται δε οια λαβεσθαι. De pictura Veneris, lib. ii. p. 810.

[s] Το ευσκιον ησπασαντο, και ευπνουν, και το εισεχον τε και εξεχον. In vita Apollonii, lib. ii. p. 72.

by which he insinuates, that animation, or the soul of painting, owes its being to a just conduct of lights and shades: And hence it was, no doubt, that the paintings of Parrhasius were termed * realities; they being possessed of such a force of Clear obscure, as to be no longer the imitations of things, but the things themselves: Agreeable to this, is the observation of an ancient writer, "That in painting, [*t*] the contour "of the illumined part, should be blended "with and lost in the shade; for on this, "joined to the advantage of colouring, de-"pend animation, tenderness, and the simi-"litude to truth."

* Αψευδεις.

[*t*] Δει ταν σκιαν και ταν γραμμαν παρεμφαινεσθαι επι της γραφεος. Το γαρ εμψυχον και το ἁπαλον, και το μεμιμημενον την αληθειαν, συν τῃ χρηστοτητι των χρωματων, μαλιστα γινεται δια τουτων. Theages Pythagoricus apud Stobæum.

B. OVID

B. OVID thus marks this tranſition of colours in his deſcription of the rainbow [*u*].

A thouſand colours gild the face of day,
With ſever'd beauties, and diſtinguiſh'd ray;
Whilſt in their contact they elude the ſight,
And loſe diſtinction in each others light.

A. A REMARK made by Petronius Arbiter, on certain paintings of Apelles, points out the happy effects of this delicacy of

[*u*] In quo diverſi niteant cum mille colores,
Tranſitus ipſe tamen ſpectantia lumina fallit,
Uſque adeo quod tangit idem eſt, tamen ultima diſtant. Metam. lib. vi.

Videmus in Iride aliquid flammei, aliquid lutei, aliquid cærulei, et alia in *Picturæ modum* ſubtilibus lineis ducta, ut ait Poeta; ut an diſſimiles colores ſint, ſcire non poſſis, niſi cum primis extrema contuleris; uſque adeo mira arte naturæ, quod a ſimillimis coepit in diſſimilia deſinit. Seneca Nat. quæſt. lib. i. c. 3.

pencil. "[x] With ſuch ſubtilty, ſuch a "likeneſs to nature, were the extremities "of the figures blended with their ſhades, "that you muſt have taken what was be-"fore you for real life." Nicias the Athenian is praiſed by Pliny, for his knowledge in the Clear obſcure; "[y] He preſerved "the lights and ſhades, and was particu-"larly careful, that his paintings ſhould "project from the canvaſs." But, the great-

[x] Tanta enim ſubtilitate extremitates imaginum erant ad *ſimilitudinem* præciſæ, ut crederes etiam animorum eſſe picturas. In Satyrico.

Men of a refined taſte, have a feeling of thoſe delicacies, which eſcape the notice of common obſervers; thus Pliny, ambire enim debet ſe extremitas ipſa et ſic deſinere, ut promittat alia poſt ſe, oſtendatque etiam quæ occultat.

This artifice of withdrawing the outline imperceptibly from the eye, is that which gives to bodies their roundneſs of projection: It was much ſtudied by the ancients, and too much neglected by Raphael; whoſe contours are ſometimes ſo marked, that his figures appear too evidently to be of a piece with the canvaſs.

[y] Lumen et umbras cuſtodivit, atque ut eminerent e tabulis picturæ, maxime curavit. Lib. xxxv—11.

eſt

eſt effect in this kind, is by the ſame attributed to the Alexander of Apelles, in the character of Jupiter the thunderer: "[z] "The fingers (ſays he) ſeem to ſhoot for-"ward, and the thunder to be out of the "picture." This paſſage is too ſtriking to need a comment. Let us compare the idea we receive from this, with the happieſt productions of the modern artiſts; what could we expect more from the magick pencil of Correggio? I mean as to the effect of clear obſcure; for, I am at a loſs, from whom to expect, the beauty and grace of an Alexander, united to the majeſty and ſplendor of a Jove. If it appears from what I have offered, that the painter can by a nice conduct of light and ſhade, give to the characters he brings on the ſcene a kind of real exiſtence: So can he, by a par-

[z] Pinxit et fulmen tenehtem; digiti eminere videntur, et fulmen extra tabulam eſſe. Lib. xxxv. 10.

tial

tial diſtribution of this advantage, give them an evident preference one to the other; and by adding a degree of ſplendor to each character, proportioned to its importance in the drama, he becomes maſter of a beautiful gradation, no leſs ſatisfactory to the underſtanding, than pleaſing to the eye.

SINCE I cannot offer you an example of this in any of the ancient paintings now to be ſeen, I ſhall remind you of a piece of poetic painting, in which you will find every circumſtance of dignity and beauty, ſet off with the fineſt effect of Clear obſcure, that, perhaps, ever entered into the imagination of either poet or painter. It is, where Virgil introduces Æneas into the preſence of Dido [*a*].

[*a*] Vix ea fatus erat, cum circumfuſa repente ....
Scindit ſe nubes, et in æthera purgat apertum.
Reſtitit Æneas, claraque in luce refulſit,

Scarce

Scarce had he ſpoke, when lo! the burſting cloud
Melts into air: Confeſs'd the hero ſtood,
Mark'd by the form and ſplendor of a god;
The rays maternal round his temples play,
And gild his beauties with a brighter day;
Theſe the fond mother ſtudious to improve,
Breath'd on his perſon all the powers of love;
Thro' his long winding locks the magic flows,
Beams from his eyes, and in each feature glows.

There is ſomething in this deſcription ſo truly pictureſque, it breaks upon the imagination with ſuch a ſudden energy of Clear obſcure, that I am perſuaded, the poet muſt have had in his eye, ſome celebrated picture in this ſtyle. It is eaſy to diſtinguiſh, when the arts borrow their ideas one from another, and the lights which they ſo commu-

Os, humeroſque Deo ſimilis: Namque ipſa decoram
Cæſariem nato Genetrix, lumenque Juventæ
Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflarat honores.
Æneid. i. ver. 590.

nicate

nicate and receive, reverberate, and prove reciprocally their beauties.

B. I COULD never read the paſſage you have juſt quoted, without being ſtruck with the beauty of this image; but you have ſupplied me with an adventitious pleaſure: The correſpondence of theſe ſiſter arts, acts, in ſome degree, like the harmony of conſenting voices; the idea, which they expreſs, is the ſame, but the effect is doubled in their agreement. When warmed by the deſcription of Virgil's Laocoon, we gaze on that at the Vatican, his cries are more piercing, his pains more exquiſite, and the ideas of the poet are as uniſons to thoſe of the ſtatuary.

A. THUS far I have touched on the two leading objects of the Clear obſcure; firſt, That roundneſs or projection, by which figures are diſengaged from their fond, and

ſpring, as it were, from canvaſs into life.—Secondly, The diſtinctive or pictureſque diſtribution of light to the ſeveral characters introduced on the ſcene.

I SAY, I have only touched on theſe ſubjects, it being my deſign, rather to trace the outlines, than to give the full image of painting. To be equal to this laſt, I muſt have, not only an informed judgment, but a creative hand; for, without a knowledge, and practice in the mechanic, there is no venturing into the depths of this art. However, I flatter myſelf, that this ſketch, rude as it is, will carry with it more of the true features of the original, than any you could collect from the writings of our painters, or the authority of our Cicerones; and though it ſhould not give us a perfect knowledge, it will give us a pleaſing and claſſical view of our ſubject. The third care of the painter, in the Clear obſcure, if not ſo obvious,

is no way leſs eſſential than the former. When ſeveral objects preſent themſelves in one view to the eye, we may obſerve, that they all differ in the force of their appearance, each receiving and reflecting the rays of light variouſly, according to its peculiar form, texture, or poſition: This variety in nature, exerted in its imitation, gives to painting a wonderful air of truth; the eye meeting the ſame effects in the copy, which it has been uſed to in the original, loſes ſight of art, and receives the new creation as from the hand of nature. To this, no doubt, Philoſtratus alludes, when having propoſed [*b*] hills, woods, and rivers, as the objects

[*b*] Αλση, και ὄρη, και πηγας; και τον ἀιθερα ει ᾧ ταυτα. In exod. Icon. p. 763. Ed. Lip.

That the ancients excelled in Landſcape painting, we have the teſtimony of Pliny; Ludius, Divi Auguſti, ætate primus inſtituit amœniſſimam parietem picturam, villas, et porticus, ac topiarca opera lucos, nemora, colles, piſcinas, euripos, amnes, litora qualia quis optaret: Varias ibi obambulantium ſpecies, aut navigantium. Lib. xxxv. 10.

of

of paint, he adds, and the air in which they are: Now, there is no repreſenting the air otherwiſe than by its effects; the which, can be ſenſible only, in the relative appearances of ſuch objects, as are contained in it. But, of all theſe circumſtances of diverſity, the difference ariſing from their reſpective diſtances, is the moſt obvious and extenſive; this is to be diſtinguiſhed two ways by the diminution of forms; and the degreeing of colours. Theſe vary, according to the denſity, or depth of the medium, through which they are ſeen. The firſt, being the meaſurement of proportions, is regulated by the laws of perſpective: But the ſecond, though it muſt co-operate with

And Pliny the younger, deſcribing one of his Villas, in a letter to a friend, endeavours to give him the higheſt idea of it, by comparing it with a well painted landſcape. Lib. v. Ep. 6.

Let thoſe, who affirm ſo confidently, that the ancients were unacquainted with the Clear obſcure and perſpective, explain, how theſe things are to be repreſented without them.

the

the former, can be governed only by the eye, and comes within the province of the Clear obſcure; which, by ſetting its objects in full or diminiſhed lights, can mark minutely their withdrawing from the eye, and determine their ſeveral diſtances, by the relative force of their appearances. What knowledge the ancients had of theſe laws, and what uſe they made of them, may be collected from many paſſages in their writings; it will be ſufficient to quote an example of each; touching the meaſurement of forms. "[c] How pleaſing, ſays Philoſtratus, "is the artifice of the painter; for, having manned the walls with armed ſoldiers, he preſents ſome intire, ſome half "figures; of ſome we ſee the breaſts, now

[c] Ἡδυ το σοφισμα του ζωγραφου· περιβαλλων γαρ τοις τειχεσιν ανδρας ὡπλισμενους, τους μεν αρτιους παρεχει ὁραν, τους δε ἡμισεας, και στερνα ενιων, και κεφαλας μονας, και κορυθας μονας, ειτα αιχμας. Αναλογια ταυτα, ω παι, δει γαρ κλεπτεσθαι τους οφθαλμους τοις επιτηδειοις κυκλοις συναπιοντας. Philoſtratus, lib. i. p. 768. Ed. Lipſ.

"the

" the helmets, and laſt of all their ſpears: " This is proportion, young man; for, " the objects muſt thus ſteal from the eye, " as it follows the ſeveral groupes through " their proper gradations." The ſame author, is equally explicit, concerning the gradation of colours; for, deſcribing in a picture, the effects of viſion through water, he obſerves, "[*d*] That the fiſh near the " top ſeemed black; the next to them, leſs " ſo; the next to thoſe begin to elude the " eye; now they are ſhadowy, now wa- " tery, and now mere fancy; for, the eye, " as it deepens in the water, finds its powers " to grow dull and confuſed."

B. You have advanced, that, to give depth to a perpendicular plane, and of

[*d*] Μελανες μεν οἱ ανω δοκουσιν, ἡττον δε οἱ εφεξης. οἱ δε μετ' ἐκεινους, ηδη παραψευδονται την οψιν. ειτα σκιωδεις, ειτα ὑδαροι, ειτα ὑπονοησαι. Καταβαινουσα γαρ εις το ὑδωρ ἡ οψις αμβλυνεται διατριβουν τα εν αυτῳ. Phil. Icon. lib. i. c. Piſcatores, p. 784.

 courſe,

courſe, the degreeing and diſtancing of objects, is the province of the Clear obſcure: It ſhould ſeem, that the modern ſculptors have not thought ſo, when, without any ſuch aids, they have attempted in their baſſo Relievo's to produce the ſame effects.

A. THEIR ill ſucceſs juſtifies my obſervation; their firſt line of figures, only, has a plane to reſt on; the others are ſuſpended, and, contrary to the laws of nature, as they retire from the eye, and diminiſh in proportion, they riſe in height; inſomuch, that the feet of the hindmoſt are often on a parallel with the knees of the foremoſt. The ancients were too wiſe to give into ſuch an abſurdity; their purſuit, in all their works, was a good effect; and nothing could have a worſe than this. We therefore find, that in ſculpture, they attempted not to mark their diſtances, otherwiſe, than by a ſimple diminution of the Relievo; but, left to painting,

painting, what ſculpture could not aſſume, the deception of the Clear obſcure.

B. YET, from this, which was an inſtance of their good ſenſe, has been drawn an argument of their ignorance; and, becauſe they did not force the laws of the Clear obſcure into ſculpture, to which they are aliens; it has been inferred, that they knew not their connection with painting, out of which they naturally grow.

A. I HAVE, I think, both from reaſon and authority, proved the weakneſs of this ſuppoſition; but, ſhould you ſtill have the leaſt doubt, the teſtimony of Virtruvius muſt intirely remove it. By this, it will appear, that the Greek painters, not only knew the rules and ſtudied the effects of perſpective; but that their greateſt philoſophers, and mathematicians, thought it worthy their attention, to reduce theſe ef-

fects to ſure and determined laws. "[e] Aga-
" tharcus was the firſt who painted a ſcene,
" at the time when Æſchylus exhibited his
" tragedies at Athens: He has left a com-
" mentary on this ſubject. From this hint,
" Democritus and Anaxagoras wrote on
" perſpective; explaining, in what manner
" we ſhould, agreeable to the appearances
" in nature, from a central point, make the
" lines to correſpond with the eye, and the
" direction of the viſual rays: So that, from
" a ſeeming confuſion, may reſult a natural
" effect; and the ſcene become a true re-
" preſentation of buildings: And, that

[e] Agatharcus primum, Athenis Æſchylo docente tragoediam, ſcenam fecit; et de eâ re commentarium reliquit: Ex eo moniti Democritus et Anaxagoras, de eadem re ſcripſerunt, quemadmodum oporteat ad aciem oculorum, radiorumque extenſionem, certo loco centro conſtituto, ad lineas naturali ratione reſpondere; uti de incertâ re, certæ imagines ædificiorum in ſcenarum picturis redderent ſpeciem; et quæ in directis planiſque frontibus ſint figuratæ, alia abſcedentia, alia prominentia eſſe videantur. In Præf. lib. vii.

" thoſe

"thoſe objects which are drawn on a per-
"pendicular plane, may appear, ſome re-
"tiring from the eye, others advancing to-
"wards it." You will obſerve on this paſ-ſage, that the painter was before-hand with the philoſopher; and by imitating the va-rious effects of viſion, had worked himſelf into the myſtery of its laws. So that in this, as in many other caſes, practice, in-ſtead of being the child, was the parent of ſcience.

B. YOU have fully vindicated the ſcience of the ancients in the particular before us, and diſſipated that cloud, with which the vanity of the moderns had obſcured it; I am afraid, the more we examine any pre-tended advantage over them, the leſs reaſon we ſhall find to triumph.

A. HAVING thus given a ſketch of the three principal objects of the Clear obſcure;

it will be sufficient to mention the fourth, as it seems to spring of itself from a just exertion of the former; I mean the union of the Clear obscure. This is, when the particular accidents of lights and shades so cooperate, as to produce, in the general, a fine effect; and that the picture sends forth such a proportion of light, as is most pleasing to the eye, and advantageous to its several objects. Of this, if I understand him right, Pliny speaks in the following passage. "[*f*] Now splendor was added, this is a "different thing from light; but, being "the result of light and shade, it was there-"fore called the tone." And Plutarch, speaking of the painting of Dionysius [*g*], uses force and the tone as synonymous; and

[*f*] Adjectus est splendor, alius hic quam lumen: quem, quia inter hoc et umbram esset, appellaverunt TONON. Lib. xxxv. 5.

[*g*] Τα Διονυσιου ζωγραφηματα, ισχυν εχοντα και τονον. Plutarch in Timoleonte.

with

with reaſon, as it is this accord or harmony of the Clear obſcure, that gives to painting its firſt and ſtriking effect. This it is that enchants us, in the Nativity, and other pieces of Correggio; and to repreſent its power in the ſtrongeſt light, I need but obſerve, that where this is, we are charmed by a Caravaggio; where it is wanting, we look coldly on a Raphael.

B. I HAVE often thought, when I have had before me a painting of the Roman ſchool, that it was like looking at a proſpect in a gloomy day: The beauties of nature are there; but they want that, which ſhould illumine and embelliſh them. The union of the Clear obſcure, ſuch as you have deſcribed it, is the ſun of picture.

A. YOU have expreſſed it juſtly; for it is not only pleaſing in its general effect, but gives vigour and warmth to each particular

object; and beſtows on them, like the breath of Venus, the *lætos honores*, thoſe gladſome beauties, which raiſe them above the condition of an ordinary appearance.

B. WHEN I conſidered how little ſatisfaction I had received on this ſubject, from the writings of the moderns, I did not imagine that you could ever clear this obſcurity, by lights borrowed from thoſe of the ancients; eſpecially, as I have been accuſtomed to believe, [*b*] that their painters were but ſuperficially, if at all, verſed in this branch of their art. You have explained ſo fully the different powers and merits

[*b*] Some have aſſerted roundly, that the ancients were unacquainted with the Clear obſcure; others (who conſider, that a certain degree of it is inſeperable from the very nature of painting) ſuppoſe, that, what they knew of it, was nothing more than the mere effect of imitation; without principles or ſcience. Had this been the caſe, is it to be imagined, that ſo judicious a critic as Cicero, would have ſpoken of the

of

of the Clear obſcure, that I think, in order to have a reaſonable degree of knowledge in this matter, we need do no more, than apply thoſe obſervations to the paintings of the Venetian and Lombard ſchools. But yet, as in treating of this ſubject, you have mentioned Raphael and Correggio; and ſeemed to ſet them in contraſt one to the other; it would be a further ſatisfaction, ſhould you mark more particularly, in what that difference conſiſts.

A. IT ſhould ſeem, that in the Clear obſcure, Raphael knew no part but the imitative; we find the caſt of his lights and ſhades, to be no other, than the caſual ef-

lights and ſhades of eloquence; or propoſed the conduct of painters in the Clear obſcure, as worthy the imitation of orators? The paſſage is as follows, and merits a particular attention: Sed habeat tamen illa in dicendo admiratio, ac ſumma laus umbram aliquam, et receſſum, quo magis id, quod erit *illuminatum*, exſtare, atque eminere videatur. De Oratore, lib. iii.

fect

fect of the diſpoſition of his figures. Correggio, on the other hand, is intirely ideal; and conſiders the diſpoſition of his figures, merely as it tends to produce a better effect of Clear obſcure. It is no wonder therefore, that ſcience ſhould be ſuperior to accident.

RAPHAEL's ſyſtem, in the compoſition of his hiſtory, was ſimple and uniform; it conſiſted wholly in placing his ſtrongeſt lights foremoſt, and giving them a gradual diminution into the fond. Hence, moſt frequently, his figures in the firſt plane are dreſſed in white; a practice, which he learned from the Florentine ſchool: But Correggio, and the Lombard ſchool, put forward the pure and unmixed colours; ſuch as red, yellow, and blue; obſerving that the white has an effect [*i*] too tranſparent

[*i*] For this reaſon Titian brought forward his obſcures, and threw his clears into the back ground. This may appear to counteract the principle I at firſt and

and weak. This method of Raphael, such as I have described it, answers fully in giving a roundness to his foremost figures; but it is weak in its general effect: He knew not the powers of the different colours, still less, the beauties which they communicate and receive from each other. Correggio was a master of both; he not only knew their just balance and reciprocal influence, but extends this knowledge even to their shades. Thus, you may distinguish in a painting of his, the shade of a rose coloured drapery, from that of a red; as you may, the shade of a clear white, from that of one more obscure. It is easy to conceive, what advantages, an uncommon genius, and elegant imagination, must draw from such resources as these; hence springs that

laid down; but, as the clears and obscures fly from each other, they mutually serve, according as they are placed, to throw each other forward, or at a distance.

warmth,

warmth, that variety, that magic, which enchants the eye, and prepoſſeſſes the underſtanding: For, certainly we do not judge of Correggio as of other painters; prejudiced by the charms of his Clear obſcure, grimace ſometimes paſſes for beauty, affectation for grace; it is by this that he always gains his end, which is to pleaſe; and we view his works with a predilection, which doubles his beauties, and blinds us to his errors.

B. FROM this repreſentation of the merit of Correggio, are we not to look upon it rather as fantaſtical than real? Does it not operate more, by ſeducing the eye, than ſatisfying the judgment?

A. THIS ſeduction is no ſmall merit in a painter; it is an union of the mechanic and ideal; it is the power of realizing his conceptions; from which, however, we ſhould

ſhould receive little pleaſure, were not thoſe conceptions in themſelves pleaſing; for the Flemiſh artiſts, are in this equal, if not ſuperior to any; but their aims are vulgar: But Correggio is, in general, amiable in his ideas, and happy in his expreſſions; he was more conſtant in his purſuit of grace than of beauty; hence he as often out-runs the one, as he falls ſhort of the other; but the ſplendor of his Clear obſcure overbears our cenſure; and he is to us, what Apelles was to the ancients, the ſtandard of the amiable and the graceful.

B. MIGHT we not, by blending the Clear obſcure of Correggio, with the compoſition of Raphael, form to ourſelves an image of perfect painting?

A. IT cannot be denied, that, had the latter been more knowing in this branch of his art, his paintings would have had a much better

better effect; and yet, nothing is more natural, than that the event ſhould be ſuch as we find it. The ideas of Correggio, tending ever to pleaſe, led him, of courſe, to the diſcovery of the means productive of his aim; Raphael, on the other hand, while he was buſied in tracing the paſſions, and intent on determining their movements, was naturally led by the ſeverity of his purſuit into a ſimplicity, or perhaps, a neglect of colouring. The reaſonableneſs of this concluſion, is confirmed by an example from antiquity; Ariſtides, who was probably the moſt ethic of all their painters, was, as we are told by Pliny, rather hard in his colouring.

B. HOWEVER general the caſe may be, it does not prove that the things are in themſelves diſcordant; on the contrary, you have ſatisfied me in the characters of Apelles and Parrhaſius, that they may very

well exiſt in one and the ſame artiſt. Can a painter be excuſable; who is weak in the moſt eſſential part of his art, namely, that which gives reality to his imitations? His aim, in general, may not be to flatter the eye; but, it ſhould be always to ſatisfy our feeling. He may think juſtly, and convey his thoughts clearly; yet, his work is but a ſbozzo, till, by colouring and the Clear obſcure, it puts on the ſemblance of truth. But, excluſive of the good effect of this ſcience in the general, there are particular caſes, in which it is indiſpenſable; as, in the repreſentations of heavenly and aërial beings: When theſe, inſtead of being ſuſpended in a bright and diaphanous glory, are nailed to a muddy fond, or wade thro' the obſtructions of a heavy dawbing, we are offended at the impropriety of their appearance; and the firſt thought we have, is, to wonder how they came there.

A. THE imagination enlightened by the warm and glowing images which it receives from the poets, bears with impatience thoſe gloomy and ponderous bodies, with which our painters people their heavens. The defect of education in our artiſts, is no where ſo ſenſible, as on theſe occaſions; what fire might a painter catch from the following deſcription;

Nor delay'd the winged ſaint
After his charge receiv'd; but from among
Thouſand celeſtial ardors, where he ſtood
Veil'd with his gorgeous wings, up ſpringing light
Flew thro' the midſt of Heaven
Par. Loſt, book v. ver. 247.

What an effect of clear obſcure is hinted in theſe lines?

Haſte hither, Eve, and worth thy ſight behold,
Eaſtward among theſe trees, what glorious ſhape
Comes

Comes this way moving; ſeems another morn
Ris'n on midnoon.

Par. Loſt, book v. ver. 308.

The Italian painters have no excuſe. Arioſto and Taſſo abound with beautiful and pictureſque ideas. There is not, perhaps, a finer image in poetry, than the following one by Taſſo.

" *Coſi dicendo, fiammeggiò di zelo*
" *Per gli occhio fuor del mortal uſo accenſi:*
" *Pei nel profondo dè ſuoi rai ſi chiuſe,*
" *E ſparve.* Canto xii. Stanza 93.

What a ſubject for a fine colouriſt, to delineate the form of an angel, retiring and melting into the ſplendor which ſurrounds it?

B. THE painting of Correggio alone verges on theſe poetic ideas: We acknowledge in his angels the inhabitants of heaven; crayoned in ſplendor, pellucid in

glory, their clear and animated tints breathe a divinity; they flit in air, like the ſkirtings of a paſſing cloud, they drop from heaven, like rain through an April ſun.

A. ONE would imagine that Pope had been animated with the ſpirit of Correggio, and had taken poſſeſſion of his pencil, when he thus pictured his ſylphs:

Some in the fields of pureſt æther play,
And baſk and whiten in the blaze of day.

Men of a ſuperior genius, view nature through the ſame medium, a fine imagination; ſo that, however different their arts may be in the mechanic part, they will often approach each other in the ideal. Of all the arts, poetry and painting are the moſt congenial; and we may obſerve, that as the former never appears more lovely, than when ſhe dreſſes herſelf in the beauties of painting; ſo, the latter is never ſo tranſporting,

porting, as when ſhe emulates the flights, and catches the images of poetry.

B. WHAT you have ſaid in this place of Correggio, is much to his advantage; but, you juſt now treated him rather ſlightly on the article of *Beauty*; a merit, applied to him by others as peculiar and diſtinctive: I am at a loſs to account for this oppoſition of ſentiments. A Greek philoſopher being aſked, what was Beauty? Anſwered, This was the [*k*] queſtion of a blind man; yet I am tempted to ſubject myſelf to the ſame rebuke; for without ſome explanation of this matter, we muſt ever, in our judgments on painters, contradict, or talk unintelligibly to one another.

A. I SHOULD think ſuch beauty abſolute, in which we ſhould find, a purity of colours, an elegance in the proportions, har-

[*k*] Τυφλου το ερωτημα.

mony of features, and happineſs of character.

B. EXCUSE me a minute; what do you mean in this place by character?

A. I MEAN that emanation of the mind, which marks its peculiar complexion; which inſpires the features, graces the action, and gives to the whole perſon a particular aim and ſignificance. Hence the poet,

Thus doth beauty dwell
There moſt conſpicuous, e'en in outward ſhape,
Where dawns the high expreſſion of a mind.
Pl. of the Im.

Now the reaſon why we differ ſo much in our judgments on beauty, is, that in the uſe of this word, we annex to it, ſome more, ſome fewer of the forementioned ideas; as each man differs from another, in the caſt of his imagination, or the juſtneſs of his eye.

Thus

Thus one, much delighted with the pure and vivid tints of Titian, ſhall with difficulty acknowledge beauty in the groſs complexions of Raphael, however elegant the proportions, or happy the character. A ſecond, to whom harmony of features fills his conception of beauty, ſhall admire Carlo-Maratte; to the ſurpriſe of thoſe, who feel no effect from an union of features unenlivened by expreſſion. Oppoſed to this perſon ſhall be one, with whom character alone ſtands for beauty; thus, when a Madonna of Correggio gazes on her child, with a fondneſs truly maternal; or ſmiles delighted with his playful action; he calls that beauty, which a more correct eye (obſerving that the proportions are not perfectly juſt, and the caſt of features, perhaps, even vulgar) ſhall admit to be nothing more than a pleaſing expreſſion. But, excluſive of theſe particular acceptations, we uſe this word in a ſenſe ſtill more vague and gene-

ral; for, as it is the nature of beauty, to excite in the beholders certain pleasing sensations, we apply indiscriminately the same title, to every thing which produces a like effect; and this is evidently the case, when we are flattered by the union of colours, or the charms of the Clear obscure. Thus, an ancient writer observes, "[*l*] That "the most opposite colours co-operate in "the formation of beauty:" A testimony, which not only serves my present purpose, but likewise, brings the paintings of the ancients into the same point of view with those of Correggio; shewing, that this last species of beauty was equally known and cultivated by both.

B. THOUGH, what you have offered, be applied only to painting, may we not extend it to common life; and account, from hence,

[*l*] Τα εναντιωτατα των χρωματων εις την του καλλους συνθησιν ὁμολογει.

for the difference of our opinions, concerning the beauty of women; each man eſteeming her moſt beautiful, who moſt readily excites in him thoſe ſenſations, which are the end of beauty?

A. OUR Britiſh Lucretius, it ſhould ſeem, thought ſo, when he tells us, that virtue

Aſſumes a various feature, to attract
With charms reſponſive to each gazer's eye
The hearts of men.

Pl. of the Im.

DIALOGUE VII.

Of COMPOSITION.

A. HISTORY Painting is the repreſentation of a momentary drama: We may therefore, in treating of compoſition, borrow our ideas from the ſtage; and divide it into two parts, the ſcenery, and the drama. The excellence of the firſt, conſiſts in a pleaſing diſpoſition of the figures which compoſe the action: However trifling the pleaſure we recieve from this may appear to ſome, it is certain, that it is founded on nature, and of courſe muſt merit our attention: If we look in a clear night on a ſtarry ſky, our eyes preſently fix on thoſe parts, where the ſtars are (if I may ſo term

term it) grouped into conſtellations. The mind, indifferent to a looſe unideal diſperſion, ſeeks for ſomething of ſyſtem and œconomy; and catches at every image of contrivance and deſign. Perhaps too, there may be ſomething of harmony in a particular arrangement of objects; ſimilar to that, which ſtrikes us, in the correſpondence of ſounds, or flatters us, in the union of colours.

B. WHATEVER the principal may be, we cannot doubt of the effect. The eye charmed with the elegant diſtribution of a Lanfranc, or Pietro di Cortona, looks with coldneſs on the ſcattered compoſitions of a Domenichino; and often wiſhes for ſomething more flattering in thoſe of the great Raphael.

A. YOUR obſervation, ſo far as it touches Raphael, ſhews the neceſſity of a diſtinction in

in this place. The diſpoſition, of which we have been ſpeaking hitherto, is purely pictureſque: But there is a ſecond kind, which we may call the expreſſive. When many perſons are preſent at an action, in which they are intereſted, it naturally ſets them in motion; their movements will depend on their characters and feeling; anger, love, or aſtoniſhment, ſhall with propriety be expreſſed by ſingle figures; whilſt others ſhall be collected into parties, or groupes, to communicate their fears, doubts, belief, and the like. Thus, in that inimitable picture by Leonardo da Vinci, when Chriſt, at ſupper with his diſciples, declares, that one of them ſhall betray him; they all inſtantly take the alarm: One of the youngeſt, riſing from his ſeat, his hands croſſed on his breaſt, looks on Chriſt with an action full of love and attachment to his perſon; the zealous and impatient St. Peter, throws himſelf a-croſs two or three others,

others and whiſpers the beloved diſciple, who is next to Chriſt; no doubt, to aſk his maſter who it ſhould be. The reſt are divided into parties, reaſoning and diſputing on their different ſentiments. It is eaſy to perceive, that the artiſt, intent on giving a full expreſſion to the ſentiments and paſſions becoming the occaſion, conſidered the diſpoſition of his picture, merely, as it tended to explain or add force to his principal action. This will ever be the caſe with the greateſt painters: They may ſet a juſt value on the ſcenery of their piece, but never ſacrifice to that the expreſſion of their ſubject. When Chriſt gives the keys to Peter, nothing is more natural, than that the diſciples ſhould all crowd together, to be witneſſes of an action which ſo much concerned them. This diſpoſition is true and expreſſive, but by no means picturesque: Raphael was too wiſe, to flatter the eye, at the expence of the underſtanding; yet,

where

where they could both be indulged with propriety, his compoſition was no leſs picturesque than expreſſive. In his St. Paul preaching at Athens, the diſpoſition in general is not only pleaſing, but the groupes are well imaged, and happily connected. In ſhort, the true difference between theſe artiſts, is this, with Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci, diſpoſition is an acceſſory; with Lanfranc and Pietro di Cortona, it is not only a principal, but comprehends too often the whole merit of the picture.

B. HAVING ſettled our ideas of this part which you call the ſcenery of painting; let us, if you pleaſe, examine the merit of the ancients in this article: It is the received opinion, I think, that their compoſitions in painting, like thoſe of their baſſo Relievo's, were extremely ſimple; if ſo, I cannot expect much from you on this head.

A. THIS

A. THIS opinion, is a neceſſary conſequence of that, which I have already mentioned, namely, that they were unacquainted with the laws of perſpective, and the effects of the clear obſcure. If the contrary of this be true, which, it ſeems to me, I have proved; we may very well conclude, that, poſſeſſed of the ſame means with the moderns, and at leaſt equal to them in genius, they ſhould employ them to the ſame ends. Was their compoſition ſo ſimple as it is thought, there could be, in this particular, no variety in the art, and, of courſe, no degrees of merit in the artiſts. Yet, we are told by Pliny, "[*l*] That Apelles confeſſed "Amphion to be his ſuperior in the diſ- "poſition: It was then an object of attention; it muſt have been too, in the opinion of the ancients, of conſequence; for, the

[*l*] Celebat Amphioni de Diſpoſitione.

hiſtorian

hiſtorian gives it as an extraordinary inſtance of [*m*] candor in the painter. It is probable then, that, as Apelles was the Raphael, ſo Amphion was the Lanfranc of Greece.

B. I AM inclined to believe from hence, that the firſt painters among the ancients, like thoſe among the moderns, were, as it is natural they ſhould be, more ſtudious of the expreſſive than the picturesque; and this may be the reaſon why the claſſic writers, who borrowed their ideas of painting from their capital works, have not dwelt on the article of diſpoſition; looking on it as a circumſtance inſeperable from the general expreſſion of the ſubject.

A. AND yet they are not altogether ſilent on this head: And we may find, even in

[*m*] Fuit Apelles non minoris ſimplicitatis quam artis; nam cedebat, &c. Lib. xxxv. c. 10.

them

them, ſufficient lights to ſatisfy thoſe, who ſet out with a good opinion of the taſte and genius of the ancients. Plutarch tells us, that Euphranor painted the engagement of the cavalry at the battle of Mantinea, [n] as if he had been inſpired. The painter had never merited ſuch ſingular praiſe, had he not wrought his ſubject to the neareſt ſemblance to truth; and that this could not have been without a particular attention to the diſpoſition, the ſame writer proves in another inſtance; when, ſpeaking of the battle fought by Araſtus againſt the Etolians, he adds, that Timanthes the painter, brought this action, as it were, before the eyes of the beholders, by the [o] *evidence of his diſpoſition.* Thus, it is plain, that the Inſpiration of Euphranor, and the evidence of Timanthes, flowed from the ſame excellence, an

[n] Ουκ ανευθουσιαστως.
De Gloria Athen. p. 346. Ed. Paris.
[o] Εμφανικως τη διαθεσει. In Arato, p. 1042.

union

union of the two kinds of diſpoſition, the expreſſive, and the pictureſque.

B. HAVING thus raiſed the curtain and examined the ſcenery, let us proceded to what you call the drama of painting.

A. IT was with great propriety ſo termed by the ancients; becauſe, like a dramatic poem, it contains, firſt, a ſubject, or fable; ſecondly, its order, or contrivance; thirdly, characters, or the manners: Fourthly, the various paſſions which ſpring from thoſe characters. Philoſtratus, ſpeaking of the compoſition of a picture, calls it in expreſs terms the [*p*] drama of the painter: Pliny has [*q*] the ſame idea, to his commendation of Nichophanes. But we ſhall be better ſatisfied of the juſtneſs of this application,

[*p*] Το δραμα του ζωγραφου.

[*q*] Cothurnus ei, et gravitas artis.

by

by examples, than by authorities. [r] It was the opinion of Nicias, one of the greateſt of the Greek painters, that the ſubject was of no leſs conſequence in painting, than the fable in poetry; and, of courſe, that great and noble actions tended to elevate and enlarge, as the contrary muſt humble and contract the genius of the painter. The ancients had great advantages in this particular; they had, not only their profane hiſtory, rich in the moſt glorious and intereſting events; but their ſacred, whilſt it furniſhed them with new ideas of the ſublime, gave no check to the pathetic. Their gods, ſuperior in grace, majeſty and beauty, were yet ſubject to all the feelings and paſſions of humanity. How unequal is the lot of the modern artiſts? employed by prieſts, or princes who thought like prieſts, their ſub-

[r] Ωιλο γαρ και την υποθεσιν αυτην μερος ειναι της ζωγραφικης τεχνης, ωσπερ τους μυθους των ποιητων.
Dem. Phal. de eloc. § 76.

jects are, for the moſt part, taken from a religion, which profeſſes to baniſh, or ſubdue the paſſions: Their characters are borrowed from the loweſt ſpheres of life: Men, in whom, meanneſs of birth, and ſimplicity of manners, were the beſt titles to their election. Even their divine maſter, is no where, in painting, attended with a great idea; his long ſtrait hair, Jewiſh beard, and poor apparel, would undignify the moſt exalted nature, humility and reſignation, his characteriſtics, are qualities extremely edifying, but by no means pictureſque. Let us, for example, compare (I muſt be underſtood to mean only as ſubjects for painting) a Chriſt armed with a ſcourge, driving the money-changers out of the temple, to an Alexander, the thunder in his hand, ready to dart it on the rebellious nations. It is not in the ſublime alone, that their ſubjects are deficient; they are equally ſo in the pathetic: The ſufferings, which they moſtly repreſent,

are

are in obedience to prophecies and the will of heaven; they are often the choice of the ſufferers; and a ten-fold premium is at hand. When St. Andrew falls down to worſhip the croſs, on which he is ſoon after to be nailed; we may be improved by ſuch an example of piety and zeal; but we cannot feel for one, who is not concerned for himſelf. We are not ſo calm at the ſacrifice of Iphigenia; beautiful, innocent, and unhappy; we look upon her as the victim of an unjuſt decree; ſhe might live the object of univerſal love; ſhe dies the object of univerſal pity. This defect in the ſubject, and of habitude in the painters, accounts for the coldneſs, with which, we look in general on their works in the galleries and churches; the genius of painting waſting its powers on crucifixions, holy families, laſt ſuppers, and the like, wants nerves, if at any time the ſubject calls for the pathetic or ſublime: Of this we have an inſtance

in the transfiguration by Raphael; a Chriſt uplifted by a divine energy, dilating in glory, and growing into divinity, was a ſubject truly ſublime; it is eaſy to ſee, on this occaſion, that the painter had not that enthuſiaſtic ſpirit, or thoſe ideas of majeſty, which the ſubject required: Accordingly, his pencil is timid and unequal: It is not ſo, when he drops to the bottom of the mount, to expreſs the various feelings and ſentiments of the diciples, diſtreſſed at their inability to work a miracle in their maſters abſence. The truth was, his calm, though fertile genius, could better delineate the fine and delicate movements of the mind, which have in them more of ſentiment than paſſion. This was his true ſphere, and it is here, that we muſt ſtudy, and admire Raphael.

B. YOUR obſervations on the character of Raphael, ſhow, how eſſential to painting is that, which you call the third part of the

drama, namely, the characters or manners.

A. THE ancients thought them so much so, that they expressly term picture [*s*] an art descriptive of the manners. Aristotle in his poetics, says of Polygnotus, that he was a [*t*] painter of the manners; and objects to Zeuxis his weakness in this part. We have in Philostratus the following description of a picture; "[*u*] We may instantly (says he) distinguish Ulysses, by "his severity and vigilance; Menelaus, by

[*s*] Ηθοποιητος τεχνη. Callistratus in Descrip. stat. Æscul.

[*t*] Ηθογραφος.

Aristides Thebanus animum pinxit, et sensus omnes expressit, quos vocant Græci ηθη; id est, perturbationes. Plin. lib. xxxv. 10.

[*u*] Επιδηλος ὁ μεν Ιθακησιος, απο του ςρυφνου και εγρηγοροτος, ὁ δε Αγαμεμνων, απο του ενθεου, τον δε του Τυδεως ελευθερια γραφει, γνωριζοις δ'αν και τον Τελαμωνιον, απο του βλοσηρου, και τον Λοκρον απο του ἑτοιμου. Philostrat. in Antilocho.

"his mildneſs; and Agamemnon, by a "kind of divine majeſty; in the ſon of "Tydeus, is expreſſed an air of freedom; "Ajax is known by his ſullen fierceneſs; "and Antilochus by his alertneſs." To give to theſe ſuch ſentiments and actions, as are conſequential from their peculiar characters, is [x] the ethic of painting. We may judge from hence, how advantageous it muſt be to painters in general, to be verſed in claſſical ſubjects; for, they find themſelves under a neceſſity of expreſſing the manners as they flow naturally from characters predetermined. The [y] Greek painters caught their ideas from hiſtorians and poets, and tranſlated the beauties of eloquence into paint.

B. How wonderful muſt have been that genius, which, without theſe advantages,

[x] Ἠθων ἐκφρασις. Calliſt. in Deſcrip. ſtat. Narciſſi.

[y] Apelles pinxit Dianam ſacrificantium virginum choro miſtam; quibus viciſſe Homeri verſus videtur, id ipſum deſcribentis. Plin. lib. xxxv. c. 10.

has

has all their effects? Such was our divine Raphael: He treats new ſubjects; he invents new characters: The moſt unpicturesque action, compoſed by him, ſeems to have been deſtined for paint: Chriſt gives the keys to Peter; how barren the incident! yet his pencil, like the rod of Moſes, ſtrikes a ſpring out of this rock.

A. You have deſcribed that facility, which is the gift of genius, and the image of truth: This does not conſiſt wholly, as may be imagined, in the ready execution of a conceived idea; but in the immediate perception of the juſtneſs of that idea; in a conſummate knowledge of the human heart, its various affections, and the juſt meaſure of their influence on our looks and geſtures; eaſy in promiſe, but difficult of execution; unknown, unattainable by the herd of painters, it drops from the pencil of a Raphael, Correggio, or Leonardo da Vinci. This

quality was considered by the ancients as the surest test of genius; thus Plutarch praises the paintings of [z] Nicomachus, comparing them, in happiness and facility, to the poetry of Homer. Apelles affirmed himself inferior in some points to other painters; but in this unrivalled. If we except the three, I just now mentioned, we should in vain look for this knowledge, in the crowd of modern painters. Contented with tolerable drawing, some air of beauty, and a good cast of drapery, they abandon character to the accident of features; their dramatis personæ, if we can call them such, are like the followers of Æneas, many actors with one face, *fortemque Gyam, fortemque Cloanthum*; the different echoes of one poor idea: Such characters are so far from grow-

[z] Ταις δε Νικομαχου γραφαις και τοις Ὁμηρου ϛιχοις, μετα της αλλης δυναμεως και χαριτος, προσεϛι το δοκειν ευχερως και ῥᾳδιως απειργασθαι. In Tim. Oleonte, p. 253. Ed. Paris.

ing

ing out of the ſubject, that they have always the air of Exotics, and ſeem fitter for any ſpot than that in which they are. Inſtead of placing the Bacchus and Ariadne of Carrache, in a triumphal car; we might put the miſtreſs into a cart, and ſet her lover to drive it.

B. THE profeſſors of the art, who praiſe ſo warmly the paintings in the palace Farneſe, ſhould diſtinguiſh better the mechanic part from the ideal. I have never ſeen them without regretting, that ſuch a hand to execute ſhould have been ſo ill prompted. A compoſition of this kind, though it be rich in all the other powers of paint, if it has neither beauty nor characters becoming the ſubjects, will be conſidered by a judicious obſerver, rather as the furniture than ornament of a gallery.

A. To

A. To repreſent a Juno without majeſty, or a Venus without beauty, is an inſult on our underſtandings; the peacock and dove, are not the means of diſtinction we look for: The [*a*] Juno of Polycletus is deſcribed by Maximus Tyrius, with ſnow white arms, ivory ſhoulders, beautiful eyes, in royal robes, of a majeſtic mien, and ſeated on a throne of gold.

B. THE modern ſtatuaries are ſo wholly void of character, that they are not to be

[*a*] Ἔχει, οἵαν Πολυκλείτος Ἀργείοις ἔδειξε, λευκωλένου, ἐλεφαντοπήχυος, εὐωπίαν, εὐειμοσύνα, βασιλικὴν, ἱδρυμένην ἐπὶ χρυσοῦ θρόνου. Differt. xiv.

The ſame ſtatue is celebrated by Martial in the following epigram:

Juno, labor, Polyclete, tuus, et gloria felix,
Phidiacæ cuperent quam meruiſſe manus;
Ore nitet tanto, quanto ſuperaſſet in Ida
Judice convictas non dubitante Deas.
Junonem, Polyclete, ſuam niſi frater amaret,
Junonem poterat frater amare tuam.

Lib. x. Epig. 89.

mentioned

mentioned on this ſubject; even our beſt painters are not ſo accurate as we could wiſh: Domenichino, who excels in painting children, often gives them expreſſions which no ways become their age.

A. THE truth was, he had but one expreſſion to give them, which was that of fear; ſo that, right or wrong, they muſt be frightened; he might have learned from Parrhaſius, that an innocent ſecurity was often their trueſt characteriſtic; *pinxit pueros duos, in quibus ſpectatur ſecuritas, et ætatis ſimplicitas*, Plin. The Greek artiſts, not only excelled the moderns in the propriety of their characters, they were ſometimes ſuperior even to their own poets; let us compare the Vulcan of Homer, with that of Alcamenes; the firſt, at a banquet of the gods, limps along the buffoon of the company; "the ſecond is praiſed by Cicero,

"[*b*] for

" [*b*] for that his lameneſs was marked ſo " mildly, that it did not diſgrace him." It muſt be confeſſed, that the ſtatuary is by far more decent than the poet.

WE have thus far conſidered character in its calm expreſſion of the manners; let us now trace it in its more turbulent effects, the paſſions: It is obſerved by Tully, "[*c*] " That every motion of the mind, has from " nature its peculiar countenance. [*d*] Do " not you ſee, ſays Seneca, what vigor is " given to the eye by fortitude? what " ſteadineſs by wiſdom; what modeſty,

[*b*] Athenis laudamus Vulcanum eum quem fecit Alcamenes, in quo ſtante atque veſtito, leniter apparet claudicatio non deformis. De Nat. Deor. lib. i.

[*c*] Omnis enim motus animi ſuum quendam a natura habet vultum. De Oratore, lib. iii.

[*d*] An non vides quantum oculis det vigorem fortitudo? quantam intentionem prudentia? quantam modeſtiam et quietem reverentia? quantam ſerenitatem lætitia? quantum rigorem ſeveritas? quantam remiſſionem hilaritas? Ep. cvi.

" what

"what ſtillneſs it puts on in the expreſſion "of an awful reſpect? how it is bright- "ened by joy? how fixed by ſeverity, "how relaxed by mirth?" If ſo much of the inward habit of our minds is to be collected from this intelligence of the eyes, how much more may be traced in the general tenor of the countenance, in its agreement with the agitations of the body, the movements of the limbs, and all the various indications of action? To catch theſe ſymptoms of our inward feelings, to give them their juſt meaſure of expreſſion, and render, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, the ſoul viſible, is the great end of dramatic painting.

B. I HAVE often thought, on examining the Laocoon by parts, that, had the foot only been diſcovered, the ſwelled veins, the ſtrained ſinews, and the irregular motion of the muſcles, might have led us into a conception of thoſe tortures, which are ſo divinely

vinely expreſſed in the face, ſo wonderfully marked throughout the whole body.

A. THE ancients are no leſs remarkable for their ſpirit in conceiving the primary idea, than for their patience in purſuing it in all its conſequences: The [*e*] expreſſion in this ſtatue, is worked up to ſuch a juſt extremity, their reigns through it ſuch an air of truth, that, as the leaſt addition would be extravagance, ſo every diminution would be a defect: We trace in it the labour of years, we feel from it the impreſſion of a minute. The ſtatuaries of Greece had no other advantage over its painters, than that they uſed more durable materials, bleſſed with equal genius, formed by the ſame education, their arts went hand in hand to perfection. If Praxiteles be celebrated by Di-

[*e*] Opus omnibus et picturæ et ſtatuariæ artis præferendum. Plin.

odorus

odorus Siculus, [*f*] for having transfused into marble all the passions of the soul; the same power is attributed by Pliny to the pencil of Aristides; it is not probable, that men of taste and letters, whilst they were eye-witnesses of the divine character in the Apollo; of the beauty and tenderness of the Venus; and the wonderful expression of the Laocoon; should celebrate those very qualities in the works of their painters, were they not eminently possessed of them. Pliny, [*g*]

[*f*] Ὁ καταμιξας ακρως τοις λιθινοις εργοις τα της ψυχης παθη.

[*g*] Timanthi vel plurimum affuit ingenii: Ejus enim est Iphigenia oratorum laudibus celebrata; quâ stante ad aras periturâ, cum mœstos pinxisset omnes, præcipue patruum, cum tristitiæ omnem imaginem consumsisset, Patris ipsius vultum velavit, quem digne non ptoerat ostendere. Lib. xxxv. c. 10.

It has been imagined that Timanthes borrowed this thought from the following passage in Sophocles:

——Ως δ' εσειδεν Αγαμεμνων αναξ
Επι σφαγας στειχουσαν εις αλσος κορην,
Ανεστεναξε· κἀμπαλιν στρεψας καρα,
Δακρυα προηγεν, ομματων πεπλον προθεις.

in

in his deſcription of that famous picture of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia, by Timanthes, obſerves, "that the painter having exhauſted "ed every image of grief in the by-ſtanders "and above all in the uncle; threw a veil "over the face of the father, whoſe ſorrow "he was unable to expreſs." If the ingenious Timanthes has left us to conceive an idea, which he could not execute, Ariſtides, on the other hand, has executed that which is almoſt above conception; by him was painted "[*b*] a town taken by ſtorm, in "which was ſeen an infant creeping to the "breaſt of its mother, who, though ex"piring from her wounds, yet expreſſes an "apprehenſion and fear leaſt the courſe of "her milk being ſtopt, the child ſhould "ſuck her blood." What a perfect know-

[*b*] Hujus pictura eſt, oppido capto, ad matris morientis e vulnere mammam adrepens infans: Intelligiturque ſentire mater, et timere, ne emortuo lacte ſanguinem infans lambat. Plin. lib. xxxv. c. 10.

ledge

ledge of the human ſoul muſt this painter have had, to enter thus feelingly into her inmoſtworkings! What a power, next to creative, to make ſuch tender movements ſenſible in the midſt of tortures; and the mother's fondneſs diſtinguiſhable through the agonies of death? This picture, it is probable, gave occaſion to the following epigram [*i*].

Suck, little wretch, whilſt yet thy mother lives,
Suck the laſt drop her fainting boſom gives.
She dies; her tenderneſs outlaſts her breath,
And her fond love is provident in death.

The Philoctetes of Parrhaſius is a fine image of hopeleſs wretchedneſs, of conſuming grief. The picture itſelf is happily deſcribed by the

[*i*] Ἕλκε, ταλαν, παρα μητρος ὁν ουκ ἐτι μαζον αμελξεις,
Ἑλκυσον ὑςατιον ναμα καταφθιμενης.
Ηδη γαρ ξιφεεσσι λιποπνοος· ἀλλα τα μητρος
Φιλτρα και ειν αϊδῃ παιδοκομειν εμαθον.
Anthol. lib. iii.

epigrammatist, and the compliment to the painter, has the elegance and simplicity peculiar to the Greeks [*k*].

Drawn by Parrhasius, as in person view'd,
Sad Philoctetes feels his pains renew'd.
In his parch'd eyes the deep-sunk tears express
His endless misery, his dire distress.
We blame thee, painter, tho' thy art commend;
'Twas time his sufferings with himself should end.

We cannot well conceive an image more tender, or more affecting than this. Let terror be united with pity, the muse of painting has completed her drama. Of this, the Ajax and Medea of Timomachus are

[*k*] Και τον απο Τρηχινος ιδων πολυωδυνον ἡρω
Τονδε Φιλοκτητην εγραφε Παρρασιος.
Εν τε γαρ οφθαλμοις εσκληκοσι κωφον ὑποικει
Δακρυ, και ὁ τρυχω εντος ενεστι πονος.
Ζωογραφων ω λωστε, συ μεν σοφος, αλλ' αναπαυσαι
Ανδρα ποιων ηδη τον πολυμοχθον εδει.
Anthol. lib. iv.

beautiful

beautiful examples; they are but just mentioned by Ovid in the following lines [*l*]:

Here Ajax sits with sullen rage oppress'd.
And in Medea's eyes her crime's confess'd.

Philostratus is more particular as to the former: [*m*] We cannot (says he) do justice to the Ajax of Timomachus, whom he represents distracted, unless we previously form in our minds the image of his condition: and how natural it was, after the follies he had committed, that he should sit down, overwhelmed with shame, entering on the resolution to destroy himself. This obser-

[*l*] Utque sedet vultu fassus Telamonius iram;
Inque oculis facinus barbara mater habet.
Lib. ii. Trist.

[*m*] Ουδ' αν τον Αιαντα τις τον Τιμομαχου αγασθειε, ὁς δη αναγεγραπται αυτῳ μεμῃνως, ει μη αναλαβοι τις ες τον νοῦν Αιαντος ειδωλον, και ὡς εικος αυτον απεκτονοτα τα εν τῃ Τροιᾳ βουκολια, καθησθαι απειρηκοτα, βουλην ποιουμενον και ἑαυτον κτειναι. Lib. ii. de vita Apollonii, c. 10.

vation of the historian, will serve us as a comment on the epigrammatist [n].

Here art with nature holds a doubtful strife,
And summons Ajax to a second life:
We see thee raging, and in every line
The painter's fury rises still with thine:
Thy looks the anguish of thy soul disclose,
And the mix'd tear is charged with all thy woes.

The Medea was a subject of emulation to the wits of Greece; each contending to do justice to those inimitable expressions, which they thus describe [o]:

Medea, painter, now provokes thy skill,
Hop'st thou to picture a divided will?

[n] Αισαν Τιμομαχου πλεον η πατρος· ἡρπασε τεχνα
Την φυσιν. Ὁ γραψας ειδε σε μαινομενον,
Και συνελυσσηθη χειρ ανερι· Και τα κεραστα
Δακρυα τους λυπης παντας εμιξε πονους.
Anthol. lib. iv.

[o] Ταν ολοαν Μηδειαν ὁτ' εγραφε Τιμομαχου χειρ,
Ζαλῳ, και τεκνοις αντιμεθελκομεναν.

'Tis

'Tis done: Behold, united by his art
The lovers frenzy, and the mother's heart;
Mark how the strugglings of her soul appear;
Here fury flashes, and there melts a tear.
'Twas well, her purpose only you express'd,
Who but Medea could support the rest?

The same is touch'd again with great spirit in the following epigram [p]:

What ventrous hand the curs'd Medea drew?
And brought the parricide once more in view!

Μυριον ἀρατο μεχθον ἱν' ηθεα δισσα χαραξῃ,
Ὡν το μεν εις οργαν νευε, το δ' εις ελεον.
Αμφω δ' επληρωσιν, ὁρα τυπον· εν γαρ απειλᾳ,
Δακρυον, εν δ' ελεῳ, θυμος αναστρεφεται.
Αρκει δ' ἀν μελλησις, εφα σοφος. αἱμα δε τεκνων
Επρεπε Μηδειῃ, κ' ου χερι Τιμομαχου.

Anthol. lib. iv.

[p] Τις σου, Κολχις αθεσμε, συνεγραφεν εικονι θυμον;
Τις και εν ειδωλῳ βαρβαρον ειργασατο;
Αιει γαρ διψας βρεφεων φονον· η τις Ιησων
Δευτερὸς, η Γλαυκη τις παλι σοι προφασις;
Ερρε, και εν κηρῳ παιδοκτονε· σων γαρ αμετρων
Ζηλων, εις ἁ θελεις, και γραφις αισθανεται.

Anthol. lib. iv.

Art thou by ſlighted love provok'd again
In thy child's blood thy impious hands to ſtain?
Off murdreſs! ev'n in paint thy crimes we fear;
And all the horrors of thy ſoul are here.

B. IT muſt be confeſſed, that if theſe artiſts were happy in their power to pleaſe, they were no leſs ſo, in having ſuch feeling critics, ſo capable of tranſmitting their merit to poſterity. We too have our ſhare in this happineſs; theſe deſcriptions are ſo juſt, ſo lively, ſo diſtinguiſhing, that we may look upon them as copies of thoſe divine originals. The moderns have not this advantage; all ideas of their works will vaniſh with their colours. When Arioſto celebrates Michael Angelo in the following line,

"E Michael, piu che mortal, Angel divino."

this praiſe is exceſſive, not deciſive; it carries no idea.

A. THE

A. THE reaſon is obvious, the artiſt did not furniſh the poet with any. Had the painters of Italy produced ſuch expreſſions as thoſe of the Ajax and Medea, the wits of that country, would not have been wanting in doing them juſtice. I may, perhaps, appear too general, when I include even Raphael in this obſervation; but if you reflect, you will find, that his expreſſions are more addreſſed to the underſtanding than the paſſions: They are more to be admired for their variety than force; they have little, either of the pathetic or ſublime; and the images which they leave in the mind, ſlip from it, almoſt as haſtily, as the picture from the eye. It is not ſo with the paintings of Timomachus and Ariſtides; the impreſſions we receive from them ſtrike full upon the ſoul; they dilate it, like the burſts in the muſick of Boranello; they agitate, they rouze it, like the ſymphonies of Yeo-

melli: Such expreſſions, (as was obſerved of the eloquence of Pericles) leave ſtings behind them. The ſuperiority which I have here attributed to the ancients, in the compariſon of their excellencies with thoſe of Raphael, is no way injurious to the latter; it is but placing his merit in a juſt point of view. The epithets of great and divine, ſo conſtantly beſtowed upon him, carry with them every circumſtance of perfection: We may be, and are often led by theſe into wrong judgments: Let us, if you pleaſe, examine his principal works: we have already taken notice of his conduct in the transfiguration, and of his preference of the humbler to the more exalted ſubject; in this he did but obey the true biaſs of his genius: The diſciples, in the abſence of their maſter, had attempted to diſpoſſeſs a demoniac; they failed in their attempt: The painter ſeizes this moment to expreſs their

ſurpriſe

ſurprize and concern at their diſappointment: Their ſentiments on the occaſion, are finely varied; and happily adapted to their different characters. The beauties of this picture are to be felt, not deſcribed; but yet they are beauties of an inferior order [*q*]. They ſatisfy the underſtanding, but they do not touch the heart.

B. As to your criticiſm on the transfiguration of Chirſt, you muſt conſider, that to have given it its full effect, the ſplendors of the Clear obſcure, muſt have co-operated with the ſublime in the idea: For this reaſon, it is probable, Raphael did not care to engage himſelf too far in ſuch a ſubject. Had he conceived, that he was unequal to the ſublime, he never would have attempted the hiſtory of the creation.

[*q*] In affectibus fere plus calor, quam diligentia, valet. Quint.

A. A SUBJECT great in conception, may become little in the execution. God the Creator, preſiding in the center of the univerſe, and ordering by his mighty fiat, the ſun and moon to break into exiſtence, is a ſubject truly ſublime: But, when this is repreſented, [*r*] by the figure of a man, ſuſpended in the air, with one hand on the ſun, and the other on the moon, that, which was noble to the imagination, is trifling to the eye. The immenſity of our idea ſhrinks

[*r*] The littleneſs of this idea will beſt appear, by comparing it with ſuch as are truly great,

Ride forth, and bid the deep,
Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth.

And in immediate conſequence,

Firſt in his eaſt the glorious lamp was ſeen,
Regent of day. Par. Loſt.

Such a ſubject as this will not admit of a mechanick image; we have a proof of this, when the ſame poet unhappily puts a compaſs into the hands of the Almighty Agent.

to nothing, reduced to a world of a few inches. The ſubject, therefore, was injudiciouſly choſen, and poorly treated. In the ſame manner, when we reflect on that act, when God commanded the animals of the earth, to ſpring from duſt into life, we are filled with the higheſt conception of his power; but, when we ſee, in the midſt of numberleſs beaſts, an old man, with eyes of diminiſhed luſtre, a wrinkled forehead, a long beard, and his robe hanging to the ground, we may acknowledge the venerable Merlin, but we have no lines of our Creator. Such ſymptoms of caducity do not ſuit with the divine nature; if he is to be repreſented, it muſt be, by a ſublime idea, a character of majeſty more than human; ſuch as was imagined by Homer, and executed by Phidias.

B. PLUTARCH

B. [*s*] PLUTARCH ſuppoſes ſuch an idea in the Alexander of Apelles, perſonating Jupiter the Thunderer; which, according to this writer, was painted with ſuch energy and truth, that it "gave occaſion to a "ſaying, that there were two Alexanders, "the one of Philip, invincible; the other "of Apelles, inimitable." We learn from the ſame author, that Lyſippus was no leſs ingenious than ſublime, when he drew from a ſlight inclination of the neck, which was natural to Alexander, the hint of a great expreſſion; repreſenting him looking up to heaven, with that manly boldneſs, that commanding majeſty, which are thus happily marked by the epigrammatiſt [*t*].

[*s*] Εγραψε τον κεραυνοφορον οὑτως ιναργως και κεκραμενως, ὡςε λεγειν, ὁτι δυοιν Αλεξανδρων, ὁ μεν Φιλιππου γεγονεν ἀνικητος, ὁ δε Απελλου αμιμητος. De Fort. vel Virt. M. Alex. p. 335. Ed. Paris.

[*t*] Αυδασουνθι δ' εοικεν ὁ χαλκεος εις Δια λευσσων·
Γαν ὑπ' εμοι τιθεμαι, Ζευ, συ δ' ολυμπον εχε.

Let

Let us divide, O Jove! the conqueror cries:
I lord of earth, thou, tyrant of the skies.

A. We must not expect such expressions as these from the pencil of Raphael; would you see him in his true character, observe where the angel turns our first parents out of paradise; it is plain, that he acts in obedience to a command; he lays his finger gently on the shoulder of Adam, and marks, by a certain tenderness of action, a compassion of their past weakness, and present misery. It is in tracing these slight and less obvious movements of the mind, that this amiable painter shows the true beauty of his genius; more excellent, perhaps, in expressing such feelings, in that he was not transported by the more violent. I have now brought you into the gallery of the Vatican; we must enter the apartments; though we have little to do there; for, of all

all the works of Raphael, theſe the moſt celebrated for the painting, are the leaſt to be noted for expreſſion. An aſſembly of Chriſtian doctors, or of Heathen philoſophers, are ſubjects of no motion. Heliodorus driven by angels out of the temple, promiſes expreſſion; but his terror is a grimace. When the angel viſits *St.* Peter in priſon, we might reaſonably expect, in the countenance and action of the ſaint, ſome kind of emotion; how do we find him? faſt aſleep; could Giotto have done leſs? In the action of Attila, indeed, there is ſomewhat of dignity and ſpirit; but it would diſtreſs the moſt ſanguine admirers of Raphael, to produce, from this ſeries of painting, ſuch examples of the pathetic or ſublime, as might entitle him to be ranked with the firſt painters of antiquity.

B. I SHALL

B. I SHALL excuſe your entering on a particular examination of the hiſtory of Pſyche, or the banquet of the gods; perſuaded, that you would find the paintings at the palace Chigi, as deſtitute of the expreſſions you look for, as you have already found thoſe of the Vatican. Yet we muſt acknowledge an uncommon energy and ſpirit in the flight of Mercury; and it has been obſerved, that the painter has, with wonderful art, given to Pluto, Neptune, and Jupiter, diſtinct characters, yet preſerved in all a brotherly likeneſs.

A. IT would have done more honour to his art, had he expreſſed in any one of them a great idea; the conceptions of Euphranor were very different on a like occaſion; [*u*]

[*u*] Qui cum Athenis duodecim Deos pingeret, Neptuni imaginem quam poterat excellentiſſimis majeſtatis coloribus complexus eſt, perinde ac Jovis ali-

"who, being employed at Athens, to paint "the twelve gods; expressed in Neptune "the highest idea of majesty, with a design "to make the Jupiter still more noble; "but having exhausted the force of his "imagination in the former character, he "could not rise in the latter to the point "which he ambitioned." It will be easily allowed, that the failure of Euphranor, was more glorious, than the success of Raphael: The first, hurried away by the impetuosity of his genius, aims at a flight beyond the reach of humanity: The second, secure in the mildness of his spirit, hovers within the circle of his calm conceptions. [x] We may, according to Plutarch, be pleased by

quanto augustiorem repræsentaturus; sed omni impetu cogitationis in superiore opere absumpto, posteriores ejus conatus assurgere quo tendebant, nequiverant. Val. Max. lib. viii. c. 11.

[x] Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀσφαλὲς ἐπαινεῖται μόνον, τὸ δὲ ἐπικινδύνον καὶ θαῦμα ζῆται. Plut. de educat. liberorum.

the one, but the other excites our wonder and admiration.

B. SINCE we have had ſo little ſatisfaction, in the point of expreſſion, from the paintings at the Vatican, and the palace Chigi, let us examine the deſigns, or, as they commonly are called, the cartons of Raphael. For, whatever ſhare his ſcholars may have had in the execution, we can have no doubt, but that the compoſitions were taken wholly from his drawings.

A. IF the errors in drawing, and inequalities in the ſeveral parts, mark, beyond a doubt, the pencil of the ſcholars; the variety and truth of the expreſſions prove, with equal force, both the hand and genius of the maſter. Let us trace the latter in Chriſt's charge to Peter; the keys are no ſooner delivered, or the preference given, than we

perceive the different effects manifeſt in the countenance and geſtures of the ſeveral diſciples: The two foremoſt approve the action; the one, with the calmneſs of age and judgment, the other, with the eagarneſs of youth and paſſion. Of the two, which follow, the one has his eyes fixed earneſtly on the face of Chriſt: The ſecond, ſeems ſuſpended between ſelf-love and the juſtice of the choice. The remaining ſix are divided into two groupes; in the former of which, the foremoſt figure, of a bilious and meager temperament, looks haſtily for the agreement of the next to him; who, of a quite different complexion, ſeems loſt in a ſimple and implicit admiration: Whilſt the third, piqued at their approbation, marks by an impatience in his looks, and a reſtleſsneſs of action, how ill ſatisfied he is with the preference given to Peter. The laſt groupe conſiſts, like the former, of three figures;

figures; the hindmoſt is, by a concealment of his countenance and action, withdrawn, as it were, from the ſcene. This gives a kind of repoſe to the imagination, and adds a ſpirit to the expreſſions in the other two; of whom, one, under a knit brow and forced compoſure, ſwells with a ſullen diſcontent; but the other, of a more active and fiery nature, breaks out into an open and ungoverned expreſſion of envy. Upon the whole, if we conſider the ſimplicity of the ſubject, the variety and judicious contraſts in the characters, the juſtneſs and delicacy in the expreſſions, we muſt confeſs, that, however unequal Raphael may be to the enthuſiaſm and pathetic of the antique, he is an abſolute maſter of the ſubordinate affections; and admirable, in tracing through middle life, the various and ſubtile workings of character. It would take up too much of our time, to go through the ſeveral in-

ſtances of the ſagacity and conduct of this painter; yet one is ſo ſingular in its kind, that I cannot paſs it in ſilence. When the inhabitants of Lyſtra are about to offer ſacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, it was neceſſary to let us into the cauſe of all the motion and hurry before us; accordingly, the cripple, whom they had miraculouſly healed, appears in the crowd: Obſerve the means which the painter has uſed, to diſtinguiſh this object, and, of courſe, to open the ſubject of his piece. His crutches, now uſeleſs, are thrown to the ground; his attitude is that of one accuſtomed to ſuch a ſupport, and ſtill doubtful of his limbs; the eagerneſs, the impetuoſity with which he ſolicits his benefactors, to accept the honours deſtined for them, point out his gratitude, and the occaſion of it: During the time that he is thus buſied, an elderly citizen, of ſome conſequence by his appearance, draws near,

and

and lifting up the corner of his veſt, ſurveys with aſtoniſhment the limb newly reſtored; whilſt a man of middle age, and a youth, looking over the ſhoulder of the cripple, are intent on the ſame object. The wit of man could not deviſe means more certain of the end propoſed; ſuch a chain of circumſtances is equal to a narration: And, I cannot but think, that the whole would have been an example of invention and conduct, even in the happieſt age of antiquity.

B. You have at length done juſtice to our great modern; and, it ſhould ſeem to me, from the light you have thrown on this ſubject, that the true difference between the ancients and him, conſiſts in this, that the former drew the paſſions to a point, collecting the powers of painting to one ſingle and forcible expreſſion; whilſt the genius of Raphael, more placid and diffuſed, illu-

mines and is reflected by numberleſs objects.

A. WE may add to your obſervation another reaſon why the paintings of the ancients had greater effect than thoſe of the moderns; they poſſeſſed more parts: Let me explain myſelf. In order to have a juſt idea of the different parts of painting, we are obliged to ſtudy different maſters; for colouring, Titian; for the clear obſcure, Correggio; for deſign and compoſition, Raphael: It will not be denied, that, had the laſt of theſe, united to his own the excellencies of the other two, his works would have had more the air of truth; and (which is the end of all imitative arts) ſtood more naturally in the place of the things which they repreſent: It is this nearneſs to truth, or excellency in the mechanic, which impoſes on our ſenſes, and gives its powers to the ideal:

Now,

Now, I am inclined to believe, that the firſt painters of Greece were no leſs perfect in the one than in the other. I think we have proved this in Apelles and Parrhaſius; Let us therefore ſuppoſe the merits of Titian, Correggio, and Raphael, united to the grace, beauty, and ſublime of the antique, we ſhall then have an idea of conſummate painting; and our imagination may bring before us, the Helen of Zeuxis, the Alexander of Apelles, and the Medea of Timomachus.

B. I HAVE heard it maintained by profeſſors in the art, that it was impoſſible that any one perſon ſhould excel in all the ſeveral branches of painting: affirming, that it was above the condition of humanity; and, that the time and labour beſtowed on ſome, muſt always be at the expence and to the diminution of the others.

A. THIS recalls to my mind an image, I have ſomewhere met with, of a man, who, lying under a covering that is too ſhort, no ſooner ſecures his breaſt, but he muſt bare his feet; and this will be the event in both caſes, where the genius or covering is ſcanty. But it will not be ſo, in men of quick and great abilities. I think we may prove this from the progreſs of Raphael. He no ſooner ſaw the cartons of Michael Angelo, and Leonardo da Vinci, than he dropped, in a great meaſure, the dryneſs of his maſter Perrugino; and blending the boldneſs of the firſt, with his own delicacy, ſtruck out a ſtyle of deſign more perfect than his model; In the ſame manner, and at the ſame time, his colouring was much improved by his imitation of Fran. Bartolomeo; his compoſition, by the ideas he caught from Maſſaccio; and the clear obſcure of

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the Florentine ſchool, ſuch as it was, he made his own. The misfortune of Raphael was, not that his genius was weak, but, that his examples were imperfect: The eaſe with which he ſurpaſſed theſe, ſhews, that he was equal to greater: Had he ſeen the tender carnation in the Venus of Titian; the enchantment of clear obſcure in the nativity of Correggio; his ready and comprehenſive ſpirit would ſoon have united them to his own deſign and compoſition: Of the laſt, he was in a great meaſure the inventor; it is no wonder then, as he died very young, that the beſt part of his life was employed in the improvement of them. But this was not the caſe with the greateſt painters of antiquity: Apelles had all the advantages, which Raphael wanted; inſtead of Perugino, he had a Pamphilus to his maſter; he had excellent examples in each part of painting. In deſign, Phidias and

and Polycletus; in colouring and the clear obſcure, Zeuxis and Parrhaſius; in compoſition, [z] the happy ideas of the laſt, joined to the ingenuity of Timanthes: And, as incitements to his ambition, the friendſhip of Alexander, the emulation of Protogenes, the examples and counſels of Praxiteles and Lyſippus.

B. WHATEVER might have been the reſult of theſe advantages; how excellent ſoever Apelles and his cotemporaries, in giving the utmoſt beauty and energy to a ſingle idea; you will allow, that, in mixed and varied compoſitions, Raphael is much their ſuperior; a merit, which in the eyes of many critics, will counterbalance the ſublime and pathetic of the ancients.

A. I HAVE admitted, that it was much the taſte of the Greek painters, to reſt the merit of their compoſitions on a ſingle cha-

[z] Τα Παζρασια σοφισματα.

racter

racter or expreſſion. That they judged well in this, the agreement of all the writers of antiquity, in giving the preference to theſe works, ſufficiently proves. No doubt, the nobleſt end of painting, is, by a ſudden and powerful impreſſion, to ſtrike home on the paſſions: This will never be effected, in painting, by drawing the imagination through links of ſucceſſive ideas. The children of Medea, we are told, were repreſented ſmiling at the dagger in their mother's hand; her fury, mixed with a pity of their innocence, has been fully deſcribed: Would you extend compoſition beyond this, you rather weaken than improve it; is it to be imagined, that a painter, capable of ſuch expreſſions as theſe, could not have marked the ſubordinate emotions in a number of aſſiſtants? We have already taken notice, in the Iphigenia of Timanthes, of the Climax in the expreſſions; and of his ſingu-

lar ingenuity, in diſtinguiſhing his principal character; can we ſuppoſe this artiſt unequal to trace the gradations of envy in Chriſt's charge to Peter, or the different effects of Paul's ſermon at Athens?

B. I MUST interrupt you a moment; you have affirmed, that in the pathetic, painting has little advantage from a climax in the ideas; yet, poetry and muſick move the paſſions, by a quick and growing ſucceſſion of impreſſions; the images of the one, and vibrations of the other, gentle at firſt, accumulate, and preſs upon us, with ſuch an impetuous re-iteration, as bears all before it.

A. THIS progreſs is juſt inverted in painting; the whole production is at once before us; our attention is immediately fixed on the moſt intereſting expreſſion; when we have

have ſtudied, and felt the powers of this, we then, and not till then, deſcend to the examination of the inferior movements: Thus, when we enter into an aſſembly of women, ſhould there be one amongſt them of diſtinguiſhed beauty, the eye dwells with conſtancy on her; and having taken in all her advantages, paſſes to a careleſs obſervation of the reſt. It is evident, in both theſe caſes, that the ſuperior character acts with an intrinſick, and not a relative force.

B. But we may ſuppoſe a ſubject, in which there may be many capital expreſſions; for example, the ſlaughter of the innocents.

A. In this caſe, ſome one more happy would overbear the reſt; or, ſhould they be more juſtly dealt with, the equality of their pretenſions, would weaken their ſeveral effects:

fects: At beſt, the time neceſſary to combine all the ideas and feelings peculiar to each, would deſtroy any effect, which might be hoped for, from the ſucceſſion of their impreſſions; ſo that, each could act but as a ſeperate picture; and this is the reaſon, why painting can never tranſport the imagination, or ſtimulate the ſenſe, ſo powerfully as poetry or muſick: [a] For, though

[a] When Venus appears to her ſon on the coaſt of Africk, beauty of perſon, grace of action, tenderneſs of expreſſion, with all the aids of dreſs, attributes, and diſtinction of clear obſcure, are by the painter urged in the ſame inſtant on the imagination. In poetry, theſe ideas are ſucceſſive, and (which proves the advantage of painting) the more quickly they ſucceed, the more perfect is the deſcription; I may add to this, that grace and beauty, ſtrike more warmly on the ſenſe, in their actual appearance, than by any images formed of them by words; ſo that, by as much as the real appearance would be ſuperior to paint, by ſo much is paint in this particular ſuperior to poetry.

But the poet has ample amends; he can renew and vary thoſe impreſſions at will; he can lengthen out

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it has greatly the advantage of either in the impreſſion of the inſtant, as it unites more circumſtances in that one point of time; yet it falls ſhort of both, in the quickneſs and power of repeating its ideas.

his action by a chain of the moſt intereſting circumſtances: He can do more; he can call all the ſenſes to his aid, and improve his pictures of beauty, by a voice tuned to a heavenly ſweetneſs, or air breathing a divine fragrance. Dryden has marked the advantage of this coalition of the ſenſes.

The hearing gives new pleaſure to the ſight,
And both to thought.

Milton has inſinuated the ſame in the following words, addreſſed by Adam to the angel, and, in the ſweetneſs of his numbers, ſtill breathes on our ears the angelic accents.

For, while I ſit with thee, I ſeem in heav'n,
And ſweeter thy diſcourſe is to my ear
Than fruits of palm-tree, pleaſanteſt to thirſt
And hunger both.

As to the ſecond advantage I mentioned, every reader feels, how much the following idea adds to the beauty, and aſcertains the divinity of Venus.

B. BUT

B. BUT, does not the very inſtance you have given, in the Iphigenia of Timanthes ſhew the advantage of a gradation in the expreſſions; and of courſe, contradict all that you have oppoſed to it?

A. HAD the paſſion of grief been actually expreſſed in the countenance of Agamemnon, the caſe would have been preciſely as I ſtated it juſt now: But his face being hid, and his feelings left wholly to our imagination, our attention fixes firſt on thoſe expreſſions, which are the objects of ſenſe, and riſes from the real to a conception of the

" *Ambroſiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem*
" *Spiravere.*

The ſame effect is ſenſible in Milton's deſcription of the angel Raphael, alighting on the earth.

Like Maia's ſon he ſtood;
And ſhook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled
The circuit wide.

ima-

imaginary. Now this, you ſee, is not a matter of expreſſion, but a ſtroke of ingenuity; which, as well as all the delicate, and leſs obſervable motions of the mind, are often found to owe their evidence and force to their aſſociate ideas. Thus, tho' in addreſſes to the paſſions, the ancients, intent on giving the utmoſt force to the primary idea, made uſe of but few acceſſories; they obſerved a quite different method, when the addreſs was to the imagination. What ſpirit; what variety? what a fund of invention, in the marriage of Alexander and Roxana, as painted by Aëtion, and deſcribed by Lucian? The playful and wanton compoſitions of Albani, are but roſes pulled from this tree. We find in the ſame author, the deſcription of the Centaur of Zeuxis: How excellent in the mechanic? what novelty, what boldneſs in the ideal? Let ſuch traits of genius be the character-

iſtic of the antique; I ſhall not diſpute with thoſe, who admire the picturesque diſpoſition, the multiplied characters, and laboured compoſitions of the moderns.

B. I FIND, theſe laſt have in you but a falſe friend; you joined their party juſt now, in the praiſe you gave to Raphael, only to turn upon them with more violence, when the occaſion offered.

A. I AM a ſincere admirer of the ſagacity and reſources of Raphael; but I am more moved by one great expreſſion, than by ſeveral minute ones. There is generally, in theſe laſt, ſomething equivocal and undeciſive; they are often made out more, by the imagination of the beholders, than by the pencil of the painter: To ſome, they convey imperfect ideas; to others, different. I hardly have known any two agree in

in the ſentiments which they imputed to the ſeveral auditors of St. Paul. I attempted juſt now a hiſtory of the feelings of the diſciples, on the preference given to Peter; ſome are obvious; but it is poſſible you may differ from me in many others. At beſt, they muſt be ſtudied to be underſtood; this weakens and ſubdivides the effect: It is not ſo in the pathetic, or ſublime. In the dying mother of Ariſtides, the Medea of Timomachus, the Alexander of Apelles, the ideas are manifeſt; the expreſſions deciſive; and, we can no more confound, than we can forget, the effects which they produce——

B. BUT, granting that the chief merit of the arts ſhould, as you ſay, conſiſt in great or forcible expreſſions, are not inſtances of theſe to be found in modern painting?

A. HAD I known of any comparable to thoſe, which I have quoted from the antique, they ſhould certainly have had the preference; for whatever might have given occaſion to theſe diſcourſes, my deſign was, much more, to ſettle our ideas of the art, than the pretenſions of the artiſts.

B. MAY it not be objected, that theſe advantages, which you have ſuppoſed on the ſide of the ancients, might have exiſted more in the deſcriptions, than in the works themſelves?

A. WHEN any work can be produced of modern art, equal, in the ſublime, to the Apollo; in expreſſion, to the Laocoon; in grace and beauty, to the daughter of Niobe; I ſhall allow the force of this objection. With regard to theſe, as I have already

ready obſerved, the cauſe of painting and ſtatuary is the ſame. As to compoſition, the grand point is expreſſion; colouring and the clear obſcure are proper to paint; how far the ancients excelled in theſe, excluſive of all other proofs, might be preſumed from their ſuperior genius, and indefatigable application. And now, I hope you have received, from this inquiry, the ſatisfaction I promiſed you at our firſt ſetting out. Our purſuit has not been altogether technical; a fine idea, whether it be conveyed in colours or words, tends equally to improve and enlighten the imagination; and, you cannot but have obſerved all along, a conſtant and pleaſing reſemblance, in the conceptions of the Greek artiſts, to thoſe of their poets. The ſame ſtyle of greatneſs, the ſame ſtrokes of tenderneſs, the ſame vein of elegance and ſimplicity ſhine through and beautify their works.

B. THIS

B. THIS may well be expected from the known analogy in the operations and powers of the two arts: Hence it is, that we can with juſtneſs transfer from one to the other the terms proper to each; and, as poetry is often but the colouring of words, ſo painting may be ſtyled the eloquence of colours.

A. THE lively and natural effects of painting, are in nothing more ſenſible, than in the delight the poets take, in borrowing their images and metaphors from her. Hence they learn to groupe and arrange their objects; to ſhade and illumine their figures; to draw the outlines of grace; to lay on the tints of beauty; and all the colouring of words brightens as from the touches of the pencil. This correſpondence prevails, not only in what relates to

deſcription, but even in the very eſſentials of each art. Was I to obſerve, that there were grace and beauty in the perſons; juſtneſs in the ſentiments; warmth and ſpirit in the paſſions; I at once deſcribe a good poem, or a good picture. As it is the character of fine writing, ſo it is of excellent painting, that the thoughts ſhould be natural, not obvious; elegant, not remote. [*b*] A Greek artiſt, having painted a naval engagement on the river Nile, it was neceſſary to mark the ſcene of action; to this end, he repreſented an aſs feeding on its bank, beneath which was couched a crocodile, ready to ſpring upon his prey. A modern would have planted at one end a river god, with water iſſuing from ſeven urns; and this, with no ſmall conceit of his erudition. The ſame ſimplicity and happineſs of invention are attributed in gene-

[*b*] Nealces, ingenioſus et ſolers in arte. Plin. lib. xxxv. c. 12.

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ral to the paintings of Timanthes; in one of which, he repreſented, in a little picture, a cyclops ſleeping, and, to give an extraordinary idea of his ſize, near him were drawn ſome ſatyrs, meaſuring his finger with a thyrſus. On which occaſion, Pliny makes this remark, "[c] In all his works "there is more underſtood than expreſſed; "and though his execution be maſterly, "yet his ideas exceed it." This is, in ſo many words, a deſcription of the poetry of Virgil. A circumſtance, extremely favourable to the Greek artiſts, that the praiſes due to that divine poet, ſhould be no leſs applicable to this excellent painter.

[c] In omnibus ejus operibus intelligitur plus ſemper quam pingitur; et cum ars ſumma ſit, ingenium tamen vincit artem. Lib. xxxv. c. 10.

FINIS.

REMARKS

ON THE

BEAUTIES

OF

POETRY.

By DANIEL WEBB, *Esq*;

a Gentleman at Bath

Then Criticism the Muse's Handmaid prov'd,
To dress her Charms, and make her more belov'd.
Essay on Criticism.

LONDON,
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MDCCLXII.

AF

Poetry.

REMARKS
ON THE
BEAUTIES
OF
POETRY.

Aſpaſia, Hortenſius, Eugenio.

Hort. YOU did not know, Eugenio, that the Gentleman who has juſt left us, is a Poet. You ſaw how he took fire at your reflection on Rhyme. Your aſſertion, that Blank Verſe is better adapted to the genius of Poetry, and the general improvement of Eloquence, cannot be diſputed, whenever the abuſe of rhyme is carried ſo far, as that the Sound becomes more

the object of our attention than the Senſe; or, that the force and beauty of Expreſſion are ſacrificed to an inſignificant jingle. Mr. Dryden, I remember, ſpeaking of Rhyme, ſays—"What it adds to ſweetneſs, it takes away from ſenſe; and he who loſes leaſt by it, may be called a gainer."

Aſp. And yet there is ſomething ſo pleaſing in the chiming of ſounds, or elſe, from the influence of early impreſſions, we are ſo accuſtomed to receive and feel it as a pleaſure, that I am perſuaded, Eugenio's opinion, were it made public, would not have many followers.

Eug. You do well, Aſpaſia, to diſtinguiſh between things pleaſing in themſelves, and ſuch as are ſo merely from the force of habit. Were there any thing truly delightful in the nature of Rhymes, it is not probable, that

that the ancients ſhould have over-looked this advantage; nor would it have been reſerved for a ſet of trifling Monks, to ſing them into reputation. But theſe are general reflections: in order to decide the matter in debate, it would be neceſſary to make a particular inquiry into the Beauties of Verſification; and to determine from them the merits of its ſeveral modes.

Aſp. I WISH, Eugenio, you would undertake this taſk. One condition, however, I muſt inſiſt on, that in Love matters you ſhew us ſome indulgence.——

What will you leave us, if you ſteal our Rhyme?

Hor. JINGLING is ſo pretty a ſubſtitute of ſentiment, it is ſo wedded to gallantry, that it were a cruelty to divorce them. I will ſecure you, Aſpaſia, againſt any ſuch at-

impt, by the authority of Shakeſpear; who, the commerce of Love, places Rhymes ſo reſpectable a light, that he ſets them n a level even with bracelets, rings, and weetmeats—The paſſage is deciſive.——

E. - - - - - My gracious Duke,
This man hath witch'd the boſom of my child:
Thou, thou, Lyſander, thou haſt *giv'n her rhymes*,
And ſtol'n th' impreſſion of her fantaſie
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, noſegays, ſweetmeats, (meſſengers
Of ſtrong prevailment in unharden'd youth.)
M. N. D.

This, Eugenio, is an authority which you muſt not diſpute; and, as Aſpaſia has made con-

conditions for her love ſongs, I muſt beg a neutrality for epigrams, riddles, and the modern ode. Let me add to theſe, that ſpecies of poetry, which we call the Mock-Heroic: for, here, I think, the rhyme ſeems to forward the playfulneſs in the ideas.

Eug. As I mean to confine my obſervations to truth and nature, the exemptions you have inſiſted on, will take place of courſe.

THE ſole aim of verſification is harmony. To underſtand this properly, we muſt divide it into two kinds. The firſt conſiſts in a general flow of verſe, moſt pleaſing to the ear, but independent on the ſenſe: the ſecond, in bringing the ſound or meaſure of the verſe to correſpond with, and accompany the idea. The former may be called a verbal harmony: the latter a ſentimental.

If we consider the flow of verse merely as music, it will then be allowed, [a] that variety is no less necessary than sweetness; and that a continued repetition of the same movements, must be as tiresome in poetry, as it would be in music. On examining Mr. Pope's verses, we shall find, that in eighteen out of twenty, the pauses rest on the fourth and last, or the fifth and last syllables: and that, almost without exception, the period is divided into two equal lines, and, as it were, link'd by the rhyme into a couplet.

[a] Και εστι λεξις κρατιστη πασων, η τις αν εχοι πλειστας αναπαυλας τε καὶ μεταβολας αρμονιας —— ρυθμοι τε αλλοτε αλλοι, και τασεις φωνης αι καλουμεναι περιτρεπεται διαφορως, κλεπτουσαι τῃ ποικιλιᾳ τον κορον.

Dion. Hal. de Struct. Orat.

For

For example——

All are but parts of one ſtupendous whole,
Whoſe body Nature is, ‖ and God the ſoul;
That chang'd thro' all, ‖ and yet in all the ſame,
Great in the Earth, ‖ as in the Ætherial frame;
Warms in the ſun, ‖ refreſhes in the breeze,
Glows in the ſtars, ‖ and bloſſoms in the trees;
Lives thro' all life, ‖ extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, ‖ operates unſpent.

Eſſay on Man.

Every ear muſt feel the ill effect of the [b] monotony in theſe lines; the cauſe of it is obvious; this verſe conſiſts of ten

[b] Διαιαπαυειν τε και ταυτοτητα φημι δειν, μεταβολα ευχαιρους ενφερουσα. Και γαρ η μεταβολη παντος εργου χρημα ηδυ. Dion. Hal. De Struct. Orat. Sect. 12.

ſyllables, or five feet: when the pauſe falls on the fourth ſyllable, we ſhall find, that we pronounce the ſix laſt in the ſame time that we do the four firſt; ſo that the couplet is not only divided into two equal lines, but each line, with reſpect to time, is divided into two equal parts——

As,

Warms in the ſun, ‖ refreſhes in the breeze,
Glows in the ſtars, ‖ and bloſſoms in the trees.

Or elſe, the pauſe falls on the fifth ſyllable, and then the line is divided with a mechanic exactneſs.

As,

Spreads undivided, ‖ operates unſpent.

Hor. Mr. Pope, in a letter to Mr. Walſh, ſpeaking of the Engliſh verſe, ſays, 'there is naturally a pauſe at the fourth, fifth,

or

or ſixth ſyllable. It is upon theſe the ear reſts, and upon the judicious change and management of which depends the variety of verſification.' Of this he gives the following examples:

At the fifth.

Where e'er thy navy ‖ ſpreads her canvaſs wings,

At the fourth.

Homage to thee, ‖ and peace to all ſhe brings.

At the ſixth.

Like tracts of leverets, ‖ in morning ſnow,

Eug. In this place, Mr. Pope takes no notice of the ſecond pauſe, which always reſts on the laſt word of each line, and is ſtrongly marked by the rhyme. But, it is on the balance between the two pauſes, that the monotony of the verſe depends. Now, this

this balance is governed by the equal diviſion of the line in point of time. Thus, if you repeat the two firſt examples given, you will find no difference, as to the time, whether the pauſe falls on the fourth or fifth ſyllable; and this, I think, will extend even to the laſt example: or, if there ſhould be any difference, it is ſo trifling, that it will generally eſcape the ear. But this is not ſo in blank verſe; for, the lines being made often to run one into the other, the ſecond pauſe is ſunk; the balance, from the equal diviſion of each line, is removed; and by changing the pauſes at pleaſure, an open is given into an unlimited variety.

Observe the effects in the firſt lines of Paradiſe Loſt.

Of man's firſt diſobedience, || and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, || whoſe mortal taſte
Brought

Brought death into the world, ‖ and all our woe,
With loſs of Eden, ‖ till one greater Man
Reſtore us, ‖ and regain the bliſsful ſeat,
Sing, heavenly Muſe.

In theſe, and the lines which immediately follow, the pauſes are ſhifted thro' all the ten ſyllables.

Hor. But this variety is not inſeparable from the nature of blank verſe. In Addiſon's Cato, there is, I think, the very ſame monotony which you have condemned in Mr. Pope: Thus,

The dawn is overcaſt, ‖ the morning low'rs,
And heavily in clouds ‖ brings on the day;
The great, th' important day ‖
Big with the fate ‖ of Cato and of Rome.

Again,

Again,

Who knows not this? ‖ but what can Cato do
Againſt a world, ‖ a baſe degenerate world,
That courts the yoke, ‖ and bows the neck
to Cæſar?
Pent up in Utica, ‖ he vainly forms
A poor epitome ‖ of Roman greatneſs,

Aſp. THIS is the very echo of the couplet meaſure.

Eug NOTHING could be more to my purpoſe; it confirms all that I have advanced; and proves further, that the monotony of the couplet does not proceed, as has been imagined, from the repetition of the rhymes, but from a ſameneſs in the movement of the verſe. No doubt, the uſe of rhymes was the firſt cauſe of confining poetic harmony to

ſuch

ſuch narrow limits [c]. Mr. Addiſon, accuſtomed to the ſecure Monotony of the couplet, had neither the genius to bear him thro', nor courage to attempt the unbounded variety of the Miltonic meaſures. Birds of a weak flight move always in a line; but, the Eagle, wonderful in his ſoarings, ſhews in his very ſtoops the power of his wing. A poet, of a ſuperior ſpirit, muſt have reſources in the variety of his numbers. The flight of Satan, in Paradiſe Loſt, is not to be pent up in a couplet.

Then from pole to pole
He views in breadth; and without longer
pauſe,

[c] Αλλα καιπερ ηδεως και μεγαλοπρεπως πολλα συνθεντες οι ανδρες ουτοι, περι τας μεταβολας και την ποικιλιαν ου πανυ ευτυχουσιν. Dion. Hal. De Struct. Orat.

Down

Down right into the world's firſt region throws
His flight precipitant; and winds with eaſe
Through the pure marble air his oblique way,
Amongſt innumerable ſtars.

Hor. In comparing, as you have done, the gradations in poetic harmony to the flight of birds, by the ſoarings and ſtoops of the Eagle, I preſume, you mean ſomething equivalent to thoſe enforcements and lowering of ſounds, which give ſuch a pleaſing variety, and have ſo powerful an effect in muſic.

Eug. Of this we have a fine example in the following paſſage; in which you'll obſerve, that the Poet ſets out with almoſt a proſaic weakneſs of verſe; thence riſing gra-

gradually, like the ſwell of an organ, he ſoars into the higheſt dignity of ſound.

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whoſe guile,
Stir'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had caſt him out from heav'n, with all his hoſt
Of rebel Angels, by whoſe aid aſpiring
To ſet himſelf in glory above his peers,
He truſted to have equal'd the moſt high,
If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
Againſt the throne and monarchy of God
Rais'd impious war in heav'n and battel proud
With vain attempt. Him the almighty power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal ſky,

With

With hideous ruin and combuſtion, down
To bottomleſs Perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains, and penal fire,
Who durſt defy th' Omnipotent to arms.

Par. Loſt.

It is obvious from what I have ſaid of it, that the Couplet is not formed for ſuch gradations as theſe. On the contrary, from the ſameneſs in its flow, every ſentiment, of what nature ſoever, comes equally recommended to the ear, and of courſe to our attention. Thus, the following thought in Eloiſa to Abelard, receives as much importance from the movement of the verſe, as it could have done, had it been deſtined to inſpire us with the moſt noble and virtuous feelings.

Not Cæſar's empreſs wou'd I *deign to prove*;
No, make me miſtreſs to the man I love.

Aſp. THIS ſentiment may, as you have obſerved, receive an importance from the movement of the verſe; but you will allow, that it is very little indebted to the expreſſion.

Eug. THE expreſſion muſt often be diſgraced, when a rhyme is neceſſary. You have made, Aſpaſia, a much better uſe of this paſſage, than I meant to do: for I produced it merely to ſhew, that where a ſameneſs of verſification prevails, there can be no degrees, no contraſts in the ſounds, which, like ſhades in painting, throw forward, and give a diſtinction to the ſuperior beauties.

Hor. MR. Pope ſeems to have had the ſame idea, with reſpect to the thoughts, that you have with reſpect to the ſounds.

He ſays,

'To beſtow heightening on every part, 'is monſtrous: ſome parts ought to be 'lower than the reſt; and nothing looks 'more ridiculous than a work, where the 'thoughts, however different in their own 'nature, ſeem all on a level.'—

Letter to Mr. Walſh.

Eug. I wonder he did not perceive the ill effects of this equality in the cadence of his verſe, as well as in the colouring of his ideas. Of all the modes of verſification, that have been cultivated by men of ſenſe, the [*d*] Latin diſtich, and modern couplet are the greateſt levellers. There is no li-

[*d*] The couplet, like the diſtich, has a ſtrong epigrammatic turn: it is formed to run into points; but, above all, it delights in the antitheſis; and the art of the verſifier is complete, when the diſcord in the ideas is

berty, no continuance in their movements. Like the out-line of a ſcholar in drawing, they are broken, and interrupted; but, a flow of pencil is the ſtile of a maſter in his art. Would you have a proof of what I advance?

Ye ſacred Nine! that all my ſoul poſſeſs,
Whoſe raptures fire me, and whoſe viſions bleſs;
Bear me, oh bear me to ſequeſter'd ſcenes,
The bow'ry mazes, and ſurrounding greens.

W. Fpreſt.

Here, you cannot but be ſenſible, how the enthuſiaſm is tamed by the preciſion of the couplet, and the conſequent littleneſs in the ſcenery.

proportioned to the accord in the ſounds. To jar and jingle in the ſame breath, is a maſter piece of Gothic refinement.

How different Milton?

Yet not the more
Ceaſe I to wander, where the Muſes haunt
Clear ſpring, or ſhady grove, or ſunny hill,
Smit with the love of ſacred ſong; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath,
That waſh thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I viſit.

Par. Loſt.

THO' it do not immediately belong to this part of my ſubject, yet I muſt take notice here of a beauty, which finds its place naturally in blank verſe, but is almoſt incompatible with the regular movement of the couplet. I mean thoſe ſudden breaks or tranſitions in the verſe, which ſo ſtrongly characterize the paſſions; and dart, as it were,

were, a ſentiment into the inmoſt ſoul of the reader.

Is this the region, this the ſoil, the clime,
Said then the loſt Arch-angel, this the ſeat
That we muſt change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom
For that celeſtial light. *Be it ſo*, ſince he
Who now is ſov'ra'n can diſpoſe and bid
What ſhall be right: *farthest from him is beſt*,
Whom reaſon hath equal'd, force hath made ſupreme
Above his equals. *Farewell, happy fields*,
Where joy for ever dwells. *Hail horrors, hail*
Infernal world, and thou profoundeſt hell
Receive thy new poſſeſſor.

Par. Loſt.

In the pathetic ſpeeches of Dido, in the fourth Æneid, there are many fine ex-

amples of the force that may be given to a ſentiment, by theſe ſudden breaks and tranſitions in the verſe: yet, theſe are entirely loſt in the Engliſh tranſlation. It cannot be ſaid, that Dryden wanted feeling. To what then can we impute this weakneſs, if it be not to the invariable tameneſs and regularity of the couplet? You, Hortenſio, may be convinced of this, by comparing the Engliſh with the Roman poet: but, Aſpaſia muſt be ſatisfied ſome other way. I will therefore repeat Mr. Dryden's Tranſlation of a particular paſſage; after which, I will give you one in blank verſe, which, I think, enters more into the ſpirit of the original. As I am certain, Aſpaſia, that you remember both the paſſage and the occaſion; it will require no introduction.

As

[e] As if the peaceful ſtate
Of heavenly powers were touched with human fate!
But go: thy flight no longer I detain,
Go ſeek thy promis'd kingdom thro' the main;
Yet, if the heavens will hear my pious vow,
The faithleſs waves, not half ſo falſe as thou,
Or ſecret ſands ſhall ſepulchres afford
To thy proud veſſels, and their perjured Lord.
Then ſhalt thou call on injured Dido's name.

Aſp. I HOPE, Eugenio, your blank verſe will give the poor queen a little more ſpirit.

[e] Scilicet is ſuperis labor eſt, ea cura quietos
Sollicitat! Neque te teneo, neque dicta refello.
I, ſequere Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas;
Spero equidem mediis, ſi quid pia numina poſſunt,
Supplicia hauſurum ſcopulis, ac nomine Dido
Sæpe vocaturum ——

Eug. You ſhall judge for yourſelf——

Think we, ſuch toils, ſuch cares diſturb the peace
Of heav'ns bleſt Habitants? Alike I ſcorn
Thy perſon and impoſture. Go, purſue
Thro' ſeas, thro' ſtorms thy viſionary throne;
In thy mid-courſe, if juſtice rules above,
O may deſtruction wait thee! may'ſt thou, daſh'd
On ſome avenging rock, call, often call
On loſt Eliza——

It often happens in the couplet verſification, that, when the poet has fully expreſſed his idea, the neceſſity of a rhyme obliges him to weaken its effect by the addition of ſome unneceſſary circumſtance; as in the following inſtance——

We

[f] What do I ſay? where am I? fury turns
My brain; *and my diſtemper'd boſom burns.*
Dryden.

Sometimes this is carried to a ridiculous exceſs.

[g] To thoſe whom fevers burn, the piercing ſmell
Of vigorous wine is grievous, *Death and Hell.* Creech.

We are tempted to laugh at ſuch trifling as this. But what ſhall we ſay, when the nobleſt images are ruined for the ſake of a jingle?

[f] Quid loquor? aut ubi ſum? Quæ mentem inſania mutat? Vir.

[g] At cum membra hominis percepit fervida febris,
Tum ſit odor vini plagæ mactabilis inſtar.
Lucretius.

He

[b] He ſpoke, and awful bends his ſable brows;
Shakes his ambroſial curls, and *gives* the nod;
The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of the God.
High Heav'n with trembling the dread ſignal took,
And all Olympus to the centre ſhook.
Pope.

Had it not been for the rhyme, that third line had never found its way into this deſcription. I need not obſerve to you, how it interrupts the ſucceſſion of the ideas, and

[b] Η, και κυανεῃσιν επ' οφρυσι νευσε Κρονιων
Αμβροσιαι δ' αρα χαιται επερρωσαντο ανακτος
Κρατος απ' αθανατοιο, μεγαν δ' ελελιξεν Ολυμπον.
Dixit, et nigris ſupercilibus *annuit* Saturnius:
Ambroſiæ vero comæ *concuſſæ ſunt* regis
A capite imortali; ac magnum tremefecit Olympum. Clarke.

embar-

embarraſſes the image. It was owing to the ſame cauſe, that Jupiter is repreſented ſhaking his curls, before he had given the nod; whence, that which in the original was a happy effect, becomes in the tranſlation a trifling action.

Aſp. I FORGIVE you this time, Eugenio, but let me have no more tranſlations.

Eug. YOUR reproof is juſt; as the force of the laſt example turns on a compariſon, which it is not in your power to make. I ſhall not forget the attention due to you a ſecond time.

HAVING thus far ſhewn that blank verſe has many advantages over rhyme; and that it leaves the poet infinitely more at large with reſpect to the ſenſe, the ſound, and the

he expreſſion: I ſhall conclude this part of ny ſubject, with a remark on the ill effect, n our language, from the prevalence of that iſſing conſonant the S *. The Greeks, ve are told, had ſuch an averſion to this etter, that they called it the ſavage, the mpure letter: if this were ſo in a language ich in vowels, what muſt it be in one ſo over-charged with conſonants as ours? When the neceſſity of a rhyme throws the governing verb in a period into the preſent ime, all the other verbs thro' that period nuſt follow the lead; thus—

s it for thee the lark aſcends and ſings?
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
Eſſ. on Man.

Here, inſtead of the melting warble of a ark, we have the diſſonant hiſſing of a

ſerpent. Should it be ſaid to this, that theſe are objections rather, to the nature of our language, than to the art of the poet; I anſwer, it may be ſo, while it is under the ſervitude of rhime: but why ſhould we prefer that mode of verſification, which aggravates the imperfections of our own language, and prevents our imitating, or adopting the beauties of others? To purſue theſe reflections minutely, would be to deſcend from the character of a critic to that of a grammarian; I ſhall therefore content myſelf with obſerving, that it is a fault, to ſuffer any one letter to take poſſeſſion of the ear, or to govern entirely the ſound of the verſe: unleſs, where the alliteration is brought in aid of the ſenſe; in which caſe, it may ſometimes become a beauty: but certainly, it is not a beauty in the following inſtance.—

Each

Each chief his sev'nfold *shield* display'd,
And half un*sheath*'d the *shining* blade.

Or,

By the hero's armed shades,
Glitt'ring thro' the *gloomy glades*.

Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.

In a less careful versifier, such effects might be imputed to negligence; but here, I doubt, they were designed as beauties. When the habit of playing with sounds is once admitted into poetry, it branches out into innumerable triflings. We cannot, in this case, be too much on our guard against the force of example. The reputation of a writer makes even his errors fashionable: we naturally imitate those whom we admire; and when we cannot assume their graces, we adopt their foibles. I fear,

Aspasia,

Aſpaſia, that this minute criticiſm has tired your patience.

Aſp. Not at all: I look upon it as an artful lowering of your ſubject, from whence you are to riſe to the ſentimental harmony.

Eug. You give authority to my ideas, by the uſe you make of them.

In treating the ſecond part of my ſubject, you will, no doubt, expect, that I ſhould borrow, as I have already done, my examples from Milton: but here, I am tempted to change my author; principally, as it gives me an opportunity of doing juſtice in this particular, to the moſt extraordinary genius, that our country, or, perhaps, any other has produced. It ſeems then to me, that, Shakeſpear, when he attends

tends to it, is not only excellent in the mechaniſm of his verſe, but, in the ſentimental harmony, equal, if not ſuperior to any of our Engliſh poets. The firſt example I ſhall give you of his merit in this kind, is in the celebrated ſpeech of King John to Hubert, when he firſt opens to him his deſigns on the life of Arthur.

Hubert.

I am much bounden to your majeſty.

K. *John.*

Good friend, thou haſt no cauſe to ſay ſo yet;
But thou ſhalt have; "and creep time ne'er
ſo ſlow,
Yet it ſhall come for me to do thee good.
I had a thing to ſay—but let it go:
The ſun is in the heaven, and the proud day
Attended with the pleaſures of the world
Is all too wanton, and too full of gawds,

To

To give me audience. " If the midnight bell
" Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth
" Sound on unto the drowſie race of night;
" If this ſame were a church-yard where we ſtand,
" And thou poſſeſſed with a thouſand wrongs;
" Or if that ſurly ſpirit, Melancholy,
" Had bak'd thy blood and made it heavy-thick,
" Which elſe runs tickling up and down the veins, &c.

Hor. I ALLOW you, that in theſe lines, there is a general agreement between the ſound, or [*i*] rather, between the movement

[*i*] The neceſſity of this diſtinction will appear from hence, that the movement of a verſe may be good, and the ſound at the ſame time may be faulty.——

of the verſe and the idea which it conveys; but it will not ſo readily be allowed you that this was deſigned: and the generality of readers will, I dare ſay, eſteem it rather caſual than artificial.

Eug. WHEN a man ſtrongly affected by any paſſion, expreſſes himſelf in words, the

As,

Muſic her ſoft aſſuaſive voice applies.
Ode on St. Cecil.

There is a continued hiſs thro' this line——

The Greek Critics carefully obſerved this diſtinction: thus Ariſtotle—*Λεγω δε ηδυσμενον μεν λογον, τον εχοντα ρυθμον και αρμονιαν και μελος.*

By the *ρυθμος* was meant the meaſure or movement of the verſe; by *μελος*, the ſweetneſs of the ſound; and by Harmony, the agreement of either, or of both with the idea. The French Critic, Dacier, by not entering into this diſtinction, has fallen into a ſtrange error; for he ſuppoſes that by the *ρυθμος* and *μελος* Ariſtotle meant the dancing and muſic which uſually accompanied the Greek drama. But I cannot conceive how either dancing or piping could be reckoned a conſtituent part of verſification—*λογον, τον εχοντα ρυθμον*, &c.—Eſpecially, if, as this ſame Critic informs us, the dancing and muſic were at the end of the Acts.——

natural

natural tones of which correſpond with his ideas, it may poſſibly be by accident. But when we obſerve the ſame co-incidence in a Poet, it is moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that it is the effect of deſign. For as he has time to ſelect his images and ſentiments, ſo he has likewiſe to accommodate the movement of his numbers to the nature of thoſe ideas he means to expreſs.

Aſp. I HAVE heard, that there have been Philoſophers who ſuppoſed that all the beauties in nature were produced by chance; I fancy, they would not have been well pleaſed, to have had the beauties in their writings included in the jumble.

Eug. WERE we to follow the common notions concerning Shakeſpear, we ſhould be induced to think, that he ſtruck out

his pictures by dashing his pencil against the canvass; or that, like the Sibyl in Virgil, he was only a temporary instrument, to convey the dictates of a superior agent.

Hor. Mr. Pope has given some encouragement to this notion, where he says—'The poetry of Shakespear is inspiration 'indeed: he is not so much an imitator as 'an instrument of nature; and 'tis not so 'just to say that he speaks from her, as that 'she speaks thro' him.'

Asp. These distinctions are too subtle for me. I shall never be brought to consider the beauties of a Poet in the same light that I do the colours in a Tulip.——

Eug. The beauties of Shakespear's versification appear accidental when they are

moſt artificial: for, the mechaniſm of his verſe, however [k] carefully formed to have its effect, is ſo faſhioned to the temper of the ſpeaker, and nature of the ſubject, that we overlook the artifice; and it paſſes along unheeded, as the caſual flow of an unſtudied eloquence. Thus the bold and reſolute Petruchio.

Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
Have I not heard the ſea, puffed up with winds,
Rage like an angry boar chafed with ſweat?

[k] Yet muſt I not give nature all: thy art
My gentle Shakeſpear, muſt enjoy a part.
For tho' the Poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the faſhion: and that he
Who caſts to write a *living line*, muſt ſweat
(Such as thine are) and ſtrike the ſecond heat
Upon the Muſes anvile——
Again——
In his well turned, and true filed lines.
Ben Johnſon,
on the memory of Mr. William Shakeſpear.

Have I not heard great ord'nance in the
field ?
And heav'ns artillery thunder in the ſkies ?
Have I not in a pitched battle heard
Loud 'larums, neighing ſteeds, and trumpets
clangue ?

In ſupport of the ſentimental harmony in
theſe lines, you may obſerve, how, by
changing the pauſes, and varying the move-
ment, the poet has at once guarded againſt
monotony, and enforced his ideas. Would
you ſee his artifice in its full light, let us
follow him through a ſucceſſion of varied
movements. Is there not ſomething mourn-
ful in the cadence of theſe lines ?

Conſtance.

What doſt thou mean by ſhaking of thy
head ?
Why doſt thou look ſo ſadly on my ſon ?

What

What means that hand upon that breaſt of thine?
Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum? K. *John.*

How different are the accents of the unhappy Conſtance, in this ſolemn and earneſt addreſs to Heaven?

Arm, arm, ye Heavens, againſt theſe perjur'd kings!
A widow cries, Be huſband to me, Heav'n!
Let not the hours of this ungodly day
Wear out the day in peace; but 'ere ſun-ſet,
Set armed diſcord twixt theſe perjured kings,
Hear me, oh, hear me!

Obſerve what ſtarts of paſſion ſucceed,

Auſtria. Lady Conſtance, peace.
Conſt. War, war, no peace; peace is to me a war.

O Lymoges, O Auſtria! thou doſt ſhame
That bloody ſpoil: thou ſlave, thou wretch, thou coward,
Thou little valiant, great in villany!
- - - - - - - What a fool art thou,
A ramping fool, to brag, to ſtamp and ſwear
Upon my party; thou cold blooded ſlave,
Haſt thou not ſpoke like thunder on my ſide?
Does the anxious heart lament its loſt peace?
- - - - - - - - - O gentle ſleep,
Nature's ſoft nurſe, how have I frighted thee,
That thou no more wilt weigh my eye-lids down,
And ſteep my ſenſes in forgetfulneſs?
Why rather, Sleep, ly'ſt thou in ſmoaky cribs,
Upon uneaſie pallets ſtretching thee,

And

And hush't with buzzing nightflies to thy
slumber;
Than in the perfum'd chambers of the Great,
Under the canopies of coſtly ſtate,
And lull'd with ſounds of ſweeteſt melody?

K. *H.* IV th.

MARK, how the terrors of a guilty mind echo thro' theſe lines——

- - - O it is monſtrous! monſtrous!
Methought the billows ſpoke, and told me
of it;
The winds did ſing it to me, and the thun-
der,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pro-
nounc'd
The name of Proſper——

Tempeſt.

WOULD

Would you compare, Aſpaſia, the tender breathings of a Lover, with the bold and ſwelling tones of a ſoldier?

Glendower— She bids you,
All on the wanton ruſhes lay you down,
And reſt your gentle head upon her lap;
And ſhe will ſing the ſong that pleaſeth you;
And on your eye-lids crown the God of ſleep;
Charming your blood with pleaſing heavineſs;
Making ſuch difference betwixt wake and ſleep,
As is the difference betwixt day and night,
The hour before the heavenly-harneſs'd team
Begins his golden progreſs in the eaſt.

In agreement with the ideas, the poet has drawn out theſe lines into a languid monotony.

Othello,

Othello.

Farewel the plumed troops, and the big war,
That make ambition virtue! Oh, farewell!
Farewel the neighing ſteed, and the ſhrill
trump,
The ſpirit ſtirring drum, th'ear piercing fife,
The royall banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumſtance of glorious
war;
And, oh, you mortal engines, whoſe rude
throats
Th' immortal Jove's dread clamours coun-
terfeit,
Farewell!—*Othello's occupation's gone.*

Aſp. That cloſe, Eugenio, was happy. Or, is it, that the change in your voice has given that effect to the verſe?

Eug. The voice of a Garrick cannot lend beauties to Shakeſpear; it is no ſmall praiſe that

that he can do him juſtice. When ſuch contraſts as theſe, which I have brought together, are made to ſucceed each other ſuddenly, and in the ſame breath, ſo that we immediately feel the tranſitions; then, the ſeveral parts have, not only the intrinſic beauties of muſical imitation, but likewiſe a relative advantage from their compariſon one with the other; and this may, with ſome allowance, be called the clear-obſcure of harmony. The following paſſage, in Cymbeline, is a proof and illuſtration of what I have advanced.

Bellarius.

O! thou Goddeſs,
Thou divine nature! how thyſelf thou blazon'ſt
In theſe two princely boys! they are as gentle

As

As Zephyrs blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his ſweet head; and yet as rough
(Their royal blood enchaf'd) as the rud'ſt wind
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And make it ſtoop to th' vale.

WITH what dignity do the numbers move in the opening of this addreſs? In the cloſe, they ſpring into a ſtorm, and ſweep all before them.

Hor. I recollect, in Lear, a beautiful example of a moſt affecting tranſition in the ſound, correſponding with a ſudden and pathetic change in the idea.

Lear.

I tax not you, you elements, with unkindneſs;

I never

I never gave you kingdoms, called you children;
You owe me no subscription. Then let fall
Your horrible pleasure;—here I stand your brave;
"A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man."

Again, when Hamlet prevents Horatio from drinking the poison.

Hamlet.

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,
"And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain.

The breast actually labours to get through this last line.

Eug. And yet these arts pass unnoticed in Shakespear, while they are celebrated in Poets

Poets of inferior merit. The cauſe of this may be, that we more readily obſerve any artifice in the management of the ſounds, when we are not much affected by the ideas. It is in excellent poetry, as in capital painting, the fine and delicate touches of art are loſt in the general effect. It requires ſome degree of temper to trace the minute and auxiliary beauties of poetic harmony thro' ſuch a paſſage as this.——

Othello.

Do you go back diſmay'd? 'tis a loſt fear:
Man but a ruſh againſt Othello's breaſt,
And he retires. Where ſhould Othello go?
Now—How doſt thou look now? Oh ill-ſtarr'd wench,
Pale as thy ſmock! when we ſhall meet at compt,

This

This look of thine will hurl my ſoul from
heav'n,
And fiends will ſnatch at it. Cold, cold,
my Girl,
Ev'n like thy chaſtity. O curſed ſlave!
Whip me, ye Devils,
From the poſſeſſion of this heav'nly ſight,
Blow me about in winds, roaſt me in ſulphur,
Plunge me in ſteep-down gulphs of liquid
fire.

BEFORE we quit Shakeſpear's verſifica-tion, I muſt obſerve to you,—that he in-tended it to be nothing more than a meaſured [*l*] or muſical proſe; except, when he

[*l*] In general, Shakeſpear's verſe has the eaſy proſaic flow of the Iambic: on extraordinary occaſions, it riſes into the dignity and harmony of the Hexameter. Thus, he has greatly the advantage of the Greek Tragedians, who were confined to the Iambick; and of the French, who, from the regularity of the Couplet, cannot looſen their verſe into a proſaic movement. That Shakeſpear's meant

meant to riſe in his ſubject, or give a diſtinction to a thought; and then, we ſhall always trace in his numbers the influence of his feelings; and find, that they aſſume a regularity and harmony, in proportion as he was intereſted in the effects. Nothing could be more oppoſite to the genius and character of this Poet, than a conſtant equality of verſification; nay, it is eaſy to ſee that he has often been careful to avoid it. The ſame is obſervable in Milton, who ſometimes deſcends into a proſaic negli-

verſification is agreeable to nature, may be proved from the authority of Ariſtotle, who having obſerved, that the Iambick meaſure was beſt adapted to the genius of tragedy, becauſe it came the neareſt to common diſcourſe, proceeds thus—

Λεξεως δε γενομενης, αυτη η φυσις το οικειον μετρον ευρε. μαλιστα γαρ λεκτικον των μετρων το ιαμβικον εστι. σημειον δε τουτου· πλειστα γαρ ιαμβεια λεγομεν εν τη διαλεκτω τη προς αλληλους· εξαμετρα δε ολιγακις, και εκβαινουσης της λεκτικης αρμονιας. Cap. iv. De Poetica.

gence, merely to interrupt the monotony; and, has frequently chosen to disgrace his measures, rather than to fatigue the ear.

Hor. Some Critics do not understand this so, when they tax his verse with being often weak and unequal.

Eug. The error then must have been in his judgment; for, these inequalities were most certainly designed.

Having in this place supported an observation on Shakespear, by a proof drawn from the practice of Milton, it may not be improper to shew, that the versification of these two poets had other points of resemblance.

Full many a Lady
I've ey'd with best regard, and many a time,
Th'

Th' harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent ear; for ſeveral virtues,
Have I lik'd ſeveral Women, never any
" With ſo full ſoul, but ſome defect in her
" Did quarrel with the nobleſt grace ſhe ow'd,
" And put it to the foil. But you, O you!
" So perfect, and ſo peerleſs are created
" Of every creature's beſt.—

Tempeſt.

In this paſſage, the riſing from the feeble and proſaic movement of the firſt lines, to the even tenor of harmony in the laſt, is entirely Miltonic. Or, to ſpeak more juſtly, it is one of thoſe fine gradations in poetic harmony, which give a kind of growing energy to a thought, and form a principal

beauty in the verſification of Shakeſpear and Milton.

Hor. THERE is a ſpecies of harmony, Eugenio, of which you have made no mention; and yet, ſome of our poets ſeem to delight much in it; I mean the imitating the preciſe idea in the ſound; as, in the whiſpering of the breeze, the tumbling of ruins.

Eug. OR, The rumbling of Drums, as thus,

The double, double, double beat
Of the thund'ring Drum
Cries, Hark, the foes come.

Dryden.

THIS is altogether ridiculous; that rule of Criticiſm, the ſound ſhould ſeem an echo to the ſenſe, muſt not be underſtood too literally.

literally. The ſounds ſhould, indeed, be always in accord with the ſenſe; but they ſhould accompany, not mimic it. As the movements of a good dancer are governed by the muſic, ſo the muſic of the verſe ſhould be governed by the idea: but, the nature of language will not admit, in this latter caſe, of a conſtant correſpondence: however, though we cannot, ſo often as we might wiſh, make our numbers harmonize with the ſubject, we ſhould never ſuffer them to run counter to it—as they too evidently do in the following inſtance.

Not half ſo ſwift the trembling doves *can* fly,
When the fierce eagle cleaves the liquid ſky;
Not half ſo ſwiftly the fierce eagle moves,
When thro' the clouds he drives the trembling doves.

Windſor Foreſt.

I have not met with any lines more at variance with their subject than these: instead of running lightly off, they *do cleave* to the tongue.

To prescribe how far we may go in this kind of imitation, is impossible, otherwise than by examples; for this, like many other beauties in poetry, can be determined only by a happiness of feeling.

The author of the Fleece has carried the sentimental harmony to the utmost allowable point, in the following description of a sudden calm.

with easy courfe
The veſſels glide; unleſs their ſpeed be ſtopp'd
By dead calms, that oft lie on thoſe ſmooth ſeas,
While

While every Zephyr ſleeps; then the
ſhrouds drop;
The downy feather on the cordage hung,
Moves not; the flat ſea ſhines like yellow
gold
Fus'd in the fire, or like the marble floor
Of ſome old temple, wide.

It is evident, that the poet ſtudied the effect in theſe verſes; but he has ſoftened his artifice by the ſimplicity of his language; had it not been for this, the labour would have been manifeſt. Hence it appears, that the perfection of this ſpecies of harmony conſiſts in its ſeeming wholly accidental: and this can only be, when the words are ſo happily choſen, and the ſounds are ſo connected with the idea, that they ſeem all to ſpring from one and the ſame motion of the ſoul.

Har. Let us, at the ſame time, ſuppoſe the idea to be beautiful, and then, your deſcription will reach much farther than you intended; for, it takes in, not only a part of good writing, but, perhaps, the whole.

Eug. From this point, we may take a general view of our ſubject. We began by conſidering harmony ſimply as an addreſs to the ear: thence, we traced its correſpondence with the idea, and, of courſe, with the imagination. The ſimpleſt truth is pleaſing by its very nature; but this pleaſure cannot be too much heightened; the force and ſurpriſe of imagery, the elegance of diction, the varied accords of harmony tend all to this point. Poetry is to the ſoul, what the ſun is to nature; it calls forth, it cheriſhes, it adorns her beauties. As we improve our language, we multiply

the

the reſources of poetry; of all the means of forwarding this improvement, the forming and perfecting our verſification is the moſt powerful.

Aſp. I did not imagine, Eugenio, that the flow of a verſe could have taken ſo large a range.

Eug. It extends ſtill farther. Why does the eye fill with gladneſs, at the bare mention of a great or generous action? The mind is pre-diſpoſed to receive the fineſt impreſſions: the true direction and happieſt effect of poetry, is, by renewing theſe impreſſions, to preſerve the mind in a ſtate of ſenſibility: we are induced to repeat thoſe impreſſions, by the pleaſing ſenſations with which they are attended: for, the ſupreme Goodneſs has ſo formed our organs, that

thoſe arts which tend moſt to refine our feelings, and, of conſequence, our manners, give us at the ſame time the greateſt pleaſure. Now, it is probable, that all the powers which produce theſe refined pleaſures ſpring from one common principle, as it is evident they tend to one common end: for there is ſuch an intercourſe among them, that, while we perfect our ſenſations in any one of them, we acquire a general aptneſs for them all.

Hort. Muſt not the moral ſenſe partake, in ſome meaſure, of this general connexion?

Eug. The author of the Characteriſtics will anſwer you much better than I can do [*m*]: "The mind, which is ſpectator

[*m*] Inquiry concerning Virtue.

" or auditor of *other minds*, cannot be with-
" out its *Eye* and *Ear*; ſo as to diſcern pro-
" portion; diſtinguiſh ſound, and ſcan each
" ſentiment or thought which comes before
" it. It feels the ſoft and harſh, the agree-
" able and diſagreeable, in the affections;
" and finds a *foul* and *fair*, a *harmonious* and
" a *diſſonant*, as really and truly here, as in
" any muſical numbers, or in the out-
" ward forms or repreſentations of ſenſible
" things."

DIALOGUE II.

Aſpaſia, Hortenſius, Eugenio.

Hor. THE moment, Eugenio, you left us yeſterday, Aſpaſia betook herſelf to her Shakeſpear: her eagerneſs to apply the hints you have given her, is not to be ſatisfied; and ſhe ſeems to enjoy her diſcoveries, like one who had ſuddenly acquired a new ſenſe.

To nobler ſights,
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed.

Aſp. Such advantages were not intended for us poor women; even Angels are partial, as you repreſent them: thus Michael, when he meant to enlighten Adam, ſays to him,

- - - - - - - - - - - - Aſcend
This hill; let Eve (for I have drench'd her eyes)
Here ſleep below, while thou to foreſight wak'ſt.

So it is you men deal with us; you cut us off from the means of knowlege, and then wonder at our ignorance. Good ſenſe you have appropriated, by calling it manly. Taſte, indeed, you allow us; but you keep it in ſubjection to your ſuperior genius:—

Eug. WERE you to examine thoroughly the difference between Taſte and Genius, you would have the ſatisfaction to find, that there are few men who are entitled to a ſubmiſſion from you on this account.

Ap. LET me, Eugenio, owe this obligation, as I have done many others, to you.

Eug. As our converſation yeſterday turned intirely on poetry, we may preſerve a connexion, by conſidering the qualities to be examined, ſolely as they relate to that art. When they are once determined in any one mode, it will be eaſy to extend them to eloquence in general, and from thence to every art in which they are naturally exerted.

A POET

A Poet illuſtrates one object by a compariſon with another: he diſcovers a juſt and beautiful relation between two ideas: this is Genius. Aſpaſia feels in its whole force the merit of that invention; this is Taſte. Now, it is evident, that there muſt be a great difference between the perceiving a beauty that is diſcovered for us, and the making that diſcovery ourſelves: accordingly, we are aſſured by experience, that a man of quick perception, may be of ſlow invention; and that a lively reader may be a dull poet.

Her. We are ſo apt to over-rate our own talents, that I do not at all wonder, that ſo many men ſhould, in themſelves, miſtake Senſibility for Genius. Are we not too much encouraged in this error by the vanity of Critics and Commentators, who are continually

tinually insinuating to us, that they partake, in some measure, of that Divinity, which they attribute to their poets.

Eug. UNHAPPILY, they support their pretension by the [*n*] authority of Cicero, who was himself the strongest exception to it. In short, Hortensio, the best Critic, considered merely as such, is but a dependent, a sort of planet to his original; he does no more than receive and reflect that light, of which his poet is the fountain.

Asp. IF you mean that I should have a clear conception of Genius, you must descend from these exalted ideas to its effects.

[*n*] Quorum omnium interpretes, ut Grammatici Poetarum, proxime ad eorum, quos interpretantur, divinationem videntur accedere—

Cic. de Divin. l. i.

Eug.

Eug. The diſtinctive property of Genius is to ſurprize, either by original Beauty, or Greatneſs in the idea. Theſe are the maſter ſprings; but there are others which are ſubordinate: for a ſuperior genius will ſo dreſs the moſt common thought, or familiar image, as to give it ſome unexpected advantage; by which it becomes apparently, if not really, original: the reſult is the ſame; we are ſurprized; every ſuch effect implies a degree of novelty, and, conſequently, of Invention.

Hor. Is not ſurpriſe rather the effect of wit than of genius?

Eug. To determine this, we muſt ſtate the difference between them. This ſeems to me to depend on the degrees of our penetration,

netration, and the nature of our feelings. The man of wit has a limited view into the relations of ideas; and from thoſe which he does ſee, his feelings direct him to chooſe the moſt ſingular, not the moſt beautiful. He works upon us by ſurpriſe merely; but the man of genius ſurpriſes by an exceſs of beauty.

Hor. It ſhould ſeem to follow from hence, that the genius may be a wit when he pleaſes; yet we have ſeen ſuch, who have made the attempt without ſucceſs.

Eug. Very rarely, when they give into the practice of being playful: thus, who has more wit than Shakeſpear? If others have failed, it muſt have been from the influence of a better habit: accuſtomed to unite ideas by their beauties, they overlook the

the little points of ſimilitude in thoſe which are the moſt oppoſed; or, of difference, in thoſe which are the moſt united: hence, as Cunning is but a ſhort-ſighted Wiſdom, Wit may be called the [illegible] ſight of Genius.

Hor. You make a greater difference between them than will be allowed by many.

Eug. I use them in that ſenſe, in which they are underſtood, when we ſay, that Ovid had wit, and Virgil genius: that this is the moſt exact and received ſenſe of theſe words, will appear from hence, that, were I to aſſert, that Virgil had more wit than Ovid, I ſhould be laughed at: yet this would be the conſequence of underſtand-

ing Wit in too [o] inlarged a ſenſe, or of making it equivalent to Genius.

Aſp. I HAVE been often ill ſatisfied with myſelf, for not readily entering into ſuch thoughts, as I have known were generally eſteemed witty. You have, I thank you, Eugenio, leſſened the number of my mortifications. I muſt own, I have always preferred Humour to Wit, perhaps it was, that I more eaſily underſtood it. I ſhould call upon you for a better explanation of this matter, were I not more intent on

[o] In the Eſſay on Criticiſm, it is ſaid—
True Wit is Nature to advantage dreſs'd.
But immediately after this, the Poet adds—
For works may have more wit than does 'em good.
Now, let us ſubſtitute the definition in the Place of the thing, and it will ſtand thus. A work may have more of *Nature dreſs'd to advantage* than will do it good. This is impoſſible; and it is evident, that the confuſion ariſes from the Poet's having annexed two different ideas to the ſame word——

another.

another. You remember, that, discoursing the other day, on a passage in the *Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting*, in which, the superiority of Poetry is rather hinted at than explained, you promised me, that you would enlarge this part of the subject, and —

Eug. I UNDERSTAND you, Aspasia; and should be glad, in this, as in every thing else, to prevent your wishes.

I OBSERVED just now, that the distinctive property of Genius is to surprise, either by original Beauty, or Greatness, in the idea.

THE principal beauties in Poetry, spring from the force or elegance of its images: of these, we will first examine such as are

peculiar to Poetry; after which, we will paſs to thoſe which are in common to Poetry and Painting. Of the former claſs, are all images founded on compariſons, either direct, or implied. The merit of theſe conſiſts in a ſtriking ſimilitude between two objects, which, to common obſervation, have no apparent or neceſſary connexion: hence we may judge of the merit of a compariſon, by the degree of our ſurpriſe, which ariſes from a combined admiration of its juſtneſs, its novelty, and beauty. A compariſon is direct in the following inſtance—

- - - - - - - On her left breaſt
A mole cinque-ſpotted, like the crimſon drops
I' th' bottom of a cowſlip——

Cymbeline.

An

An implied comparison, or, in the language of the Critics, a metaphor, consists in conveying an idea intirely by the substitution of an image: this will be best un- understood by an example.——

Angelo, in Measure for Measure, observing, that his guilty passion for Isabella was inflamed by his knowledge of her innocence, is shocked at the wickedness of his nature; which he aggravates by the force of a metaphor.

- - - - - - - - Can it be
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness! "having wast
ground enough,
"Shall we desire to raise the Sanctuary,
"And pitch our evils there? Oh fie, fie
fie."

SOMETIMES a Poet has the happineſs to
end theſe two kinds of beauty in the ſame
nage: he ſets out with illuſtrating his ob-
ct by a direct compariſon; and continues
ſupport it by a metaphor. This is a
gh degree of beauty; for, it can only
ppen, when the compariſon is ſo exqui-
ely juſt, that the qualities eſſential to the
rrowed object, are, with the utmoſt pro-
iety, transferred to the original one. Thus
llarius, deſcribing to his pupils, the ruin
his fortunes at court.

- - - - - - Cymbeline lov'd me,
nd when a ſoldier was the theme, my
name
as not far off: then was I as a tree,
hoſe boughs did bend with fruit. But in
one night,
ſtorm, or robbery, call it what you will,
Shook

Shook down my mellow-hangings, nay, my leaves;
And left me bare to weather.

Cymbeline.

Of this ſpecies of beauty, the following is, perhaps, a ſtill more elegant example—

- - - - She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,
Feed on her *damaſk* cheek.

Twelfth Night.

Shakespear's images are not mere addreſſes to the fancy; they do not play about the ſurface of an object; they carry us into its eſſence.——As, where the mother of Hamlet endeavours to excuſe his extravagance.——

This

- - - - This is mere madneſs;
And thus a while the fit will work on him:
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
Ere that her golden couplets are diſclos'd,
His ſilence will *ſit drooping*.

HAD the Poet commanded at one view the whole circle of Nature, he could not have ſelected ſuch another contraſt to madneſs. It is the moſt perfect image of a patient, innocent, and modeſt ſilence, that ever ſprung from human invention. It is by the frequency and degree of theſe beauties, principally, that an original Genius is diſtinguiſhed. Metaphors are to him, what the Eagle was to Jupiter, or the Doves to Venus, ſymbols of his Divinity; the ſure indications of Majeſty and Beauty.

Hor.

Hor. It has been a matter of wonder to many, that an imagination, at times, ſo wild and ungovernable as that of Shakeſpear, ſhould, in the finer imitations of nature, be diſtinguiſhed by an unequalled elegance and propriety.

Eng. If we conſider the nature and progreſs of the imagination, we need not wonder, that ſuperior ſpirits ſhould be the moſt ſubject to theſe exceſſes. The extremities of poetic boldneſs, like thoſe of perſonal courage, will often have a tincture of extravagance. But, this will not be the caſe in men of ſubordinate talents; truſting more to imitation than their own feelings, they move in one even tenor; with them, judgment is but an obſervance of rules; a ſecurity to their weakneſs.

And

And often, to their comfort ſhall they find
The ſharded Beetle in a ſafer hold
Than is the full wing'd Eagle.——

Cymb.

THE laſt ſpecies of beauty in comparative imagery, which I ſhall ſpeak of here, conſiſts in reducing a metaphor to a point. When a picture is given us in a ſingle word, to make out which, in our own imagination, we muſt go through a ſucceſſion of ideas, then are we ſurprized in the moſt agreeable manner, and the beauty, of courſe, is conſummate. You ſhall have, Aſpaſia, an example of this from your favourite author, Fletcher. Amintor, in order to conceal the cauſe of his grief, had put on a ſhow of mirth; Melantius, his friend, who wanted to extort the ſecret from him, was not to be ſo impoſed on.

You

- - - You may ſhape, Amintor,
Cauſes to cozen the whole world withall,
And yourſelf too; but tis not like a friend,
To hide your ſoul from me; 'tis not your nature
To be thus idle; I have ſeen you ſtand
As you were *blaſted*, midſt of all your mirth.

Maids Tragedy.

It is by the force or elegance of its alluſions and images, that a poetic diction is diſtinguiſhed from ſimple verſification. The Muſes, according to Johnſon, have their anvil, and a verſe may be laboured into preciſion and harmony: but, the ſallies of the imagination are prompt and deciſive; they ſpring at once into being, and are beauties at their firſt conception. Thus, in the language of a Poet, the ſun is the

eye

eye of heaven: the heaven itſelf—a ſtarry *pavement*; a canopy *fretted* with *golden fire.*

Does the mind exult in its fulleſt freedom?
It is—as *broad*, as *general* as the *caſing* air.
What are the repeated calamities of life?
The *ſlings* and *arrows* of outrageous fortune?
The properties of ſleep?
The *birth* of each days *life*; ſore labour's *bath*;
Balm of *hurt* minds.

Are our tender years expoſed to the infection of vice?—the canker *galls* the *infants of the ſpring.* Is the night invoked to countenance deeds of horror and cruelty?

Come, thick night!
And *pall* thee in the dunneſt ſmoak of hell.

Hor. How miſerably naked of theſe beauties are the works of our ordinary ſongſters?

ſongſters? Their metaphors are like the ſcattered trees in a deſert, ſtarved and ſolitary: in Shakeſpear, they are vigorous, luxuriant, thickly ſpread over every part of his poetry.

Eug. THIS compariſon will hold, with reſpect to images in general: as to theſe, which we have been juſt deſcribing, they ſeem to me, to bear ſome reſemblance to thoſe drawings of the capital Painters, in which, though the parts are rather *hinted* than made out, yet the ideas are compleat; they both give a delightful exerciſe to our minds, in continuing and enlarging the deſign. Thus, when the queen would perſuade Hamlet to lay aſide his mourning:—

Good Hamlet, caſt thy *nighted* colour off.

This

This metaphor ſeems, at firſt, to reach no farther than the gloominess of Hamlet's dreſs; but if our ideas go along with the poet's, we ſhall extend it to the melancholy of his mind [p].

Hor. The manner in which you have expreſſed yourſelf in this place, gives me ſome reaſon to imagine, that, joined to the pleaſure which you have here remarked, we have a kind of ſelfiſh enjoyment on theſe occaſions; for, while we enter into the views, and obey the direction of the Poet, we fancy that we co-operate with him; we grow proud of the connexion, and plume

[p] This is plain by Hamlet's anſwer,

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
That can denote me truly. —

ourſelves

burſelves in his beauties. But let me not interrupt you.

Eug. The purpoſe of Imagery is either to illuſtrate, or aggrandize our ideas: of the former, enough has been ſaid.

The greatneſs of an image is moſt obvious, when it ſtrikes us by its immediate power, and with a ſudden effect; as, in the deſcription of Satan in Paradiſe Loſt.

- - - - - - He, above the reſt
In ſhape and geſture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tow'r.

A ſecond ſpecies of the ſublime conſiſts in giving a gradation to imagery. There is not, perhaps, in Poetry, a nobler inſtance of this, than in the deſcription of Satan's return to hell—

- - He through the midſt, unmark'd,
In ſhow Plebeian Angel militant
Of loweſt order, paſs'd; and from the door
Of that Plutonian hall, inviſible
Aſcended his high throne, which under ſtate
Of richeſt texture ſpread, at th' upper end
Was placed in regal luſtre. Down a while
He ſat, and round about him ſaw unſeen:
At laſt as from a cloud his fulgent head
And ſhape Star-bright appear'd.

Par. Loſt.

Hort. WHILE you repeated theſe lines, Eugenio, I felt myſelf affected with the ſame kind of pleaſure, as when we ſee a cloud riſing ſlowly from the vale, become by degrees the ornament of the heavens. Might I, therefore, judge from my own feelings, I ſhould conclude, that ſuch images

as are in motion, and which, by a gradual enlargement, keep our ſenſes in ſuſpenſe, are more intereſting than thoſe, which owe their power to a ſingle impreſſion, and are perfect at their firſt appearance. Where there can be no gradation in an object, its influence on the mind is immediately determined.

Eug. In this obſervation, we ſee the reaſon, why the principal beauties in Paradiſe Loſt, have been naturally thrown on the perſon of Satan. To deſcribe a permanent and unchangeable glory, is to paint without ſhades; the Sun is more delightful in its ſetting, than in its meridian. The divine Perfection, pure and Angelic natures, can have no clouds, no contraſts; they are all one blaze. But, it is not ſo, in the deſcription of fallen Greatneſs; of diminiſhed

nd interrupted ſplendor; of a ſuperior nature ſunk and diſgraced, but emerging t intervals from its degradation. This is a ubject ſo truly poetic; it gives riſe to ſuch train of fluctuating images, that, let the bject be ever ſo obnoxious, if the danger, s in the preſent caſe, be remote, it ſeizes on the imagination, all calmer conſidera- tions are thrown aſide, and the ſenſes are hurried away beyond the reach of reflec- tion.

Aſp. This is the beſt apology I ever heard for a diabolical greatneſs.

Eug. As a great effect was produced in the laſt inſtance by a gradation in a ſingle image, ſo may it equally proceed from the arrangement or ſucceſſion of different ideas:

Of

Of this, the following deſcription of a ſtorm is a ſingular example.

Proſpero.

- - - - - - Haſt thou, Spirit,
Perform'd to point the tempeſt that I bad thee?

Ariel.

- - - - - - To every article:
I boarded the King's ſhip: now on the beak,
Now in the waſte, the deck, in every cabin
I flam'd amazement. Sometimes I'd divide
And burn in many places: on the top maſt,
The yards, and boltſprit, would I flame diſtinctly,
Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings the precurſors
Of dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary

And ſight out running were not; the fire
and cracks
Of ſulphurous roaring, the moſt mighty
Neptune
Seem'd to beſiege, and make his bold waves
tremble;
Yea, his dread trident ſhake.

Tempeſt.

THE circumſtances in this deſcription are brought together in a manner ſo unexpected; they crowd on each other with ſuch force and rapidity, that our ſpirits are in one continued hurry of ſurpriſe. You may obſerve, that this impetuoſity gives way by degrees to a more regular climax: we ſet out with ſurpriſe; we end in wonder.

Her. I muſt add one remark to thoſe which you have made on this paſſage. The ſub-

ſubſtituting the divinity of the ſea, to the thing itſelf, was a maſterly ſtroke of conduct. How it ſublimes the object?

Eug. You have ſeen in the laſt inſtance, that the ſublime is produced [*s*], partly, by the choice of great circumſtances; partly, by the rapid ſucceſſion of thoſe circumſtances: on the other hand, the Beautiful, which tends to delight, not, to tranſport us, may receive an equal advantage from the ſucceſſion of the ideas, and this, on a principle quite oppoſite to the former—

From camp to camp, through the foul
womb of night,
The hum of either army ſtilly ſounds;

[*k*] Ο μεν γαρ τη εκλογη των ακρων λημματων, ο δε τ
αυκνωσει των εκλελεγμενων.

Longinus, Sect. 10.

That the fixt centinels almoſt receive
The ſecret whiſpers of each others watch.
Fire anſwers fire, and through their paly flames
Each battel ſees the others umber'd face.
Steed threatens ſteed, in high and boaſtful neighs,
Piercing the Night's dull ear; and from the tents
The armourers accompliſhing the knights,
With buſy hammers cloſing rivets up
Give dreadful note of preparation.

Chor. to *H. V.*

We may obſerve in the progreſſion of ſounds, a perfect correſpondence with what has been here remarked concerning our ideas: for, in muſic, we are *tranſported* by ſudden tranſitions, by an impetuous re-iteration of impreſſions: on the contrary,

we are *delighted* by a placid ſucceſſion of lengthened tones, which dwell on the ſenſe, and inſinuate themſelves into our inmoſt feelings. The analogy between Poetry and Muſic is not confined to theſe two effects. We know, that in both theſe arts, a well ſupported climax is a conſtant ſource of the ſublime. Again, as in muſical compoſition, harmony is the reſult of a well choſen union and ſucceſſion of ſounds, ſo, in Poetry, there is a harmony or beauty, which ſprings from the moſt natural and pleaſing arrangement of our ideas.

Aſp. I READILY comprehend, that a gradual riſe from ſmaller circumſtances to greater, ſhould be productive of the ſublime, becauſe, a contrary proceſs has always a mean effect. Of a beauty of order diſtinct

ſtinct from this, I have not ſo clear a conception.

Eug. The beauty of order may be proved by the following experiment. Were you, in the above deſcription of a night ſcene, to change the order of the circumſtances, you would find, that each particular idea would loſe a part of its force, and that the general effect would be conſiderably weakened. What can be the reaſon of this, but that the arrangement of the ideas is, at preſent, ſuch, as to give the greateſt truth and evidence to the thing repreſented; ſo that the imagination, not being delayed, or embarraſſed by the neceſſity of ſtudying its object, receives every impreſſion, as it offers, with facility and promptneſs? It is on this principle, that, in the general plan, or diſpoſition of a ſubject, we are ſo well

pleaſed

pleaſed with that perſpicuity of order, that clearneſs of connexion, by which the ſeveral parts ſeem to grow out of each other, and the ſatisfaction of the underſtanding every where keeps pace with the pleaſures of the imagination. From theſe obſervations we may draw the following concluſions; firſt, that fine writing depends as much on a happineſs in the arrangement, as in the choice of our ideas: in the next place, that all ſuch progreſſive energy or beauty as has been here deſcribed, muſt, equally with thoſe images which are founded on compariſon, be entirely foreign to painting.—

Hor. We cannot, it is true, paint a compariſon or a metaphor; but, we may repreſent the various affections and paſſions of the mind, by clothing them in images, and as it were, drawing forth the ſoul into feature

ture and action. Here, it ſhould ſeem, that the Painter and Poet go hand in hand; and it may be, with ſome advantage to the former, as his imitations come nearer to a reality.

Eug. You have opened upon us a new ſcene of imagery. As to your remark on the Painters advantage, I muſt obſerve to you, that the merit of theſe *ſimple Images*, or Pictures, whether it be in poetry or painting, cannot conſiſt merely in their juſtneſs; for, this is no more than what we *expect*; it muſt therefore ſpring, either, from an exquiſiteneſs in the degree of beauty; or, from a happineſs in the circumſtances. Of the former, we have a fine example in the deſcription given by Bellarius of his princely pupil——

This

- - - - - - - - This Paladour,
(The heir of Cymbeline and Britain) Jove!
When on my three-foot ſtool I ſit, and tell
The warlike feats I've done, his ſpirits fly out
Into my ſtory; ſay, Thus mine enemy fell,
And thus I ſet my foot on's neck;— even then,
The princely blood flows in his cheek, he ſweats,
Strains his young nerves, and puts himſelf in poſture
That acts my words.

Cymbeline.

Of equal beauty, tho' in a different kind, is the following picture of Love and Sorrow.—Imogen, on her huſband's going into baniſhment, had ſent her ſervant Piſanio to attend him to the ſhip; on his return, ſhe

ſhe queſtions him as to the particulars of her huſband's departure—

Imogen.

Thou ſhoud'ſt have made him ev'n
As little as a Crow, or leſs, ere left
To after-eye him—
Piſan. Madam, ſo I did,
Im. I would have broke mine eye ſtrings, crack't 'em but
To look upon him—
Nay, follow'd him, 'till he had melted from
The ſmallneſs of a gnat, to air, and then
Have turn'd mine eye, and wept.

Cymbeline.

THE difference between poetic and real Painting, may be clearly ſeen in this laſt example: the circumſtances in this deſcription, which tend to heighten the beauty of

of the image in the laſt line, cannot be expreſſed by the Painter; he can have no advantage from a ſucceſſion of ideas. If, in ſubjects that are in common to the Poet and Painter, the latter be limited; ſo again, there are many, from which he is totally excluded. In this view, I ſhall continue, as I began, to mark the advantages peculiar to poetry. In each of theſe two laſt examples, the image ſurpriſes by the degree of its beauty. But, there are others which owe their effect, as I have ſaid, to a happineſs in the circumſtances. Of this, we have, I think, an example in that beautiful ſcence, in the Tempeſt, between Ferdinand and Miranda.

Mir. Do you love me?

Ferd. O heav'n, O earth, bear witneſs to this ſound,

And

And crown what I profeſs with kind event,
If I ſpeak true; if hollowly, invert
What beſt is boaded me, to miſchief! I
Beyond all limit of what elſe in the world,
Do love, prize, honour you.
Mir. I am a fool
To weep at what I'm glad of.

TEARS of gladneſs are not uncommon; but, Miranda, from her particular education, could have no knowledge of the paſſions in their extremes; ſhe is therefore ſurpriſed at this apparent confuſion in their ſymptoms: her ſurpriſe is a ſpring to ours—

THIS leads us, you ſee, to an eſſential point in the pathetic, namely, when a ſentiment ſprings with a peculiar happineſs from the character and the occaſion.

Thus

Thus the Poet——

The Heats and Minutes of affairs are watch'd,
And the nice Points of Time are met, and ſnatch'd.

As theſe lines were written in praiſe of Fletcher, I ſhall give you an example of the thing deſcribed, from his Maid's Tragedy—Melantius, on his arrival at Court, hears that his friend Amintor was that morning married. He knew that he was contracted to Aſpaſia; but did not know that ſhe had been deſerted by him: in this inſtant Aſpaſia comes acroſs him—

Melantius.

- - - - - - Hail, maid and wife
Thou fair Aſpaſia! may the holy knot
That thou haſt ty'd to day, laſt 'till the hand

Of age undo it! may'ſt thou bring a race
Unto Amintor, that may fill the world
Succeſſively with ſoldiers — Aſp. My hard fortunes
Deſerve not ſcorn; for I was never proud,
When they were good ——

When we know that Aſpaſia thought herſelf inſulted by the brother of her happy rival, this ſentiment becomes ſo affecting, that our hearts melt, and our eyes fill in the inſtant.

The uniformity in our feelings on ſimilar motives, though it be the ground-work of the pathetic, yet, at the ſame time, it naturally produces in us an indifference to all ſuch indications of paſſion as are obvious and general.

The

THE buſineſs therefore of the Poet, is to give ſome unexpected advantage to theſe general feelings; either, by a happineſs in the incidents from which they ſpring; or ſome peculiarity in the ſituation and character of the perſon affected: of this we have a complete example, when the Daughters of Lear preſs hard upon him to reduce the number of his Knights—

Regan.

- - - - - If you come to me,
(For now I ſpy a danger) I intreat you
To bring but five and twenty; to no more
Will I give place or notice—

Lear. *I gave you all.*—

THE ingratitude of a daughter, who owed every thing to a father's generoſity, might

naturally produce ſuch a reproach as this—but it receives an additional tenderneſs from the violent character of Lear, and the aggravating circumſtances of his children's conduct.

If the Pathetic, as ſhould ſeem from theſe proofs, muſt owe its effect to the occaſion which produced it; the ſame may be affirmed, in part, of the ſublime: I ſay in part, becauſe though great ſentiments, when produced in the Drama, muſt, in common with the pathetic, derive a particular and ſpecific beauty from a happineſs in their application; yet there will be this difference between them, that if a pathetic ſentiment be conſidered independent of the occaſion which produced it, it loſes its pathetic force. On the other hand, if a ſublime ſentiment be conſidered in the ſame light, it loſes the

advantage

advantage it received from a happineſs in its application, but retains its intrinſic greatneſs. This, I think, will appear, by comparing the anſwers of Aſpaſia and Lear, in the two laſt examples, with the following reply of Guiderius, to the raſh and fooliſh Cloten, who had threatened to kill him.

Cloten.

Art not afraid?

Guid. Thoſe that I rev'rence, thoſe I fear, the wiſe;
At fools I laugh, not fear them.—

THIS ſentiment had been noble on any occaſion; on this, it is happy as well as great.

FROM theſe obſervations it is evident, that the variety and force of our ſenti-

ents, particularly in the pathetic, muſt epend on the variety and nature of their otives. In this the Painter is extremely onfined; for among the infinite turns and orkings of the mind, which may be exreſſed by words, and become the ſprings f ſentiment, there are ſo few to which he an give a ſhape or being; and his indiations of peculiar and characteriſtic feelgs, are ſo vague and undeciſive, that his xpreſſions, like their motives, muſt be [q] bvious and general.

[q] If Painting be inferior to Poetry, Muſic, conſidered as an imitative art, muſt be greatly inferior to ainting: for as Muſic has no means of explaining the otives of its various impreſſions, its imitations of the anners and Paſſions muſt be extremely vague and unciſive: for inſtance, the tender and melting tones hich may be expreſſive of the Paſſion of Love, will be qually in uniſon with the collateral feelings of Benevonce, Friendſhip, Pity, and the like—Again, how are e to diſtinguiſh the rapid movements of Anger, from

It is obſervable, that the ſame Critics who condemn ſo much in Shakeſpear a neglect of the unities, are equally forward in acknowledging the ſingular energy and beauty of his ſentiments. Now, it ſeems to me, that the fault which they cenſure is the principal ſource of the beauties which they admire. For, as the Poet was not confined to an [r] unity and ſimplicity of action,

thoſe of Terror, Diſtraction, and all the violent agitations of the Soul? But, let Poetry co-operate with Muſic, and ſpecify the motive of each particular impreſſion, we are no longer at a loſs; we acknowlege the agreement of the ſound with the idea, and general impreſſions become ſpecific indications of the Manners and the Paſſions.

[r] Ariſtotle, in his Poetics, chap. vi. obſerves, that the firſt Dramatic Poets were irregular in the conduct of the Fable; but excelled in the Manners, and in the Diction: that the Poets of his time, on the contrary excelled in the conduct of the Fable, but were weak in the Manners, and declamatory in the Diction. By the

he created incidents in proportion to the promptneſs and vivacity of his genius. Hence, his ſentiments ſpring from motives exquiſitely fitted to produce them: to this they owe that original ſpirit, that commanding energy, which overcome the improbabilities of the ſcene; and tranſport the heart in defiance of the underſtanding. I do not mean by this to juſtify our

Manners, are to be underſtood all thoſe ſentiments which become indications of Character. The advantage of theſe in Tragedy, according to Ariſtotle, conſiſts in this, that they give us a rule, by which we may judge what the reſolutions and actions of the perſons in the Drama will be. After this, he cenſures the Poets of his time, for being weak in the Manners. Αι γαρ νυν των πλειστων, ἠθεις τραγωδιαι εισι. Dacier, his Commentator, has paſſed the ſame cenſure on the French Drama—Aujourd'hui, dans la plus part des piéces de nos Poetes, on ne connoit les mœurs des perſonnages, qu'en les voiant agir. As both the Greek and French Poets, here ſpoken [illegible]e rigid obſervers of the dramatic Unities, theſe [illegible]ſt ſtrongly confirm what has been advanced on [illegible]ct.

Poet

Poet in all his exceſſes. It muſt be confeſſed, that he has often carried the indulgence of his genius much too far: but, it is equally certain, that a rigid obſervance of the dramatic unities is not free from objections: for, as no one ſimple and confined action can furniſh many incidents, and thoſe, ſuch as they are, muſt tend to one common point, it neceſſarily follows, that there muſt be a ſameneſs and uniformity in the ſentiments. What muſt be the reſult of this? Why, narration is ſubſtituted in the place of the action; the [r] weakneſs in the manners ſupplied by elaborate deſcriptions; and the quick and lively turns of paſſion are loſt in the detail, and pomp of declamation.

Hort. May we not add to theſe an objection, which has often ſtruck me, and which

which extends to the conduct of the fable itself? When the action is confined to the time of the repreſentation, the Poet muſt often bring events together within the ſpace of four hours, which, in the natural courſe of things, would have taken up as many days. Thus, by a ſtrange kind of management, he commits a violence on nature, in order to come nearer to truth.

Eug. It is, to ſoften, in ſome meaſure, this impropriety, as well as to conform to the unities, that theſe events, inſtead of being brought into action, are ſo often thrown into [s] narration. But, this is a ſubject which cannot be properly examined in a morning's converſation: beſide, we

[s] Εστι ου τραγωδια μιμησις πραξεως σπουδαιας, και τελειας—και ου δι απαγγελιας—

Ariſt. De Poetica. Cap. vi.

have

have other objects which demand our attention.

It is a point that has not yet been determined, how far Imagery may take place in the Pathetic. Were the imagination to have no ſhare in our deſigns upon the heart, the Poet's taſk would be, indeed, a hard one. The difficulty then can only be, to ſet bounds to this indulgence. It muſt be allowed, that in the extremities of paſſion, all ſtudied and ambitious ornaments are to be avoided: hence I ſhould judge, that thoſe images which are founded on compariſon, can have little agreement with the ſimplicity of the Pathos: and this diſagreement will always be found to increaſe in proportion as the points of ſimilitude are ſpecified and enlarged. But this objection will not extend to ſimple images: theſe are often

often happily employed in the Pathetic; in theſe, Poetry co-operates with Painting; and even borrows her ideas from her ſiſter Art——

Thus, in anger—

Romeo.

Alive, in Triumph, and Mercutio ſlain?
Away to heav'n reſpective lenity,
And [*t*] fire-ey'd Fury be my conduct now!
In grief——

Juliet. Is there no pity ſitting in the clouds,
That ſees into the the bottom of my grief?

R. and *J.*

[*t*] Should this compound Epithet "fire-ey'd" be thought inconſiſtent with the true Pathos, it will be the ſtrongeſt proof that can be given, of the neceſſity of a ſtrict ſimplicity on all ſuch occaſions.——

Or

Of all our paſſions, that of Love ſhoul ſeem to have the greateſt connexion wit the fancy. If, therefore, the diſtinctio here made between ſimple and comparativ imagery, ſhould hold good in this paſſion it will hardly be diſputed in others. I ſha reſt the truth of my obſervation, as I hav hitherto done, on examples.

Juliet.

- - - - - - - Sweet, good night
This bud of love, by ſummers ripenin breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when nex we meet.

R. and J

This is not the language of nature true paſſion is impatient of ſtudied embe liſhmen

liſhments. Let us now ſee, how far the operations of the fancy may be brought to correſpond with the movements of the heart—

Ferdinand.

Wherefore weep you?

Miranda. At mine unworthineſs, that dare not offer
What I deſire to give; and much leſs take
What I ſhall die to want: but this is trifling;
And all the more it ſeeks to hide itſelf,
The bigger bulk it ſhews. Hence *baſhful Cunning*,
And prompt me, plain and holy Innocence.
I am your wife, if you will marry me;
If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow

You

You may deny me; but I'll be your ſervant,
Whether you will or no.

Ferdinand. My miſtreſs, deareſt,
And I thus humble ever.

Miranda. My huſband then.

Ferdinand. Ay, with a heart as willing
As *Bondage* e'er of freedom; here's my hand.

Miranda. *And mine, with my heart in't.*

In the images here employed, there is no artifice, no deſign; they are as ſimple as Truth herſelf.

Thus far, Aſpaſia, I have endeavoured to give you ſome general ideas of the principal beauties in Poetry. I ſhall now proceed to thoſe which I call the ſubordinate Beauties; not, that they are always inferior

in their effects, but becauſe thoſe effects are produced by means leſs obvious; and ſpring more from the manner, than from the idea itſelf. This is a diſtinction, which, in ſome caſes, will be preſerved with eaſe; in others, with difficulty: however, if the nature of the beauty, whatever it is, be well underſtood, I cannot think it of any great conſequence in what claſs it is to be ranked.

It is the peculiar province of Poetry, to raiſe us above the level of our ordinary ideas. But we are not to expect, that this can be done by a continued ſucceſſion of beautiful images, or affecting ſentiments. Here then, Art comes in aid of Nature; and our ideas muſt derive an importance from the manner in which they are conducted.—— With what a ſingular delicacy does Ophelia,

when

when she solicits Hamlet to take back his presents, reproach him with the change in his affections?

Hamlet.

No, I never gave you ought.

Oph. O my good Lord, you know right
well you did,
And with them, words of so sweet breath
compos'd,
As made the things more rich; *that perfume*
lost,
Take these again.—

The manner is somewhat varied in the following instance; Camillo, in the Winter's Tale, endeavours to dissuade the young Lovers from exposing themselves to the crosses of fortune.

I You

- - - - - - - - - You know,
Prosperity's the very bond of Love,
Whose fresh complexion, and whose heart
together,
Affliction alters.
Perdita. - - - One of these is true;
I think affliction may subdue the cheek,
But not take in the mind—

FROM an elegance in the turn of the thought, we naturally pass to a Felicity in the expression.—Thus, Posthumus reflecting on his Wife's infidelity.

Me of my lawful pleasures she restrain'd,
And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with
A pudency so rosie, the sweet view on't
Might well have warm'd old Saturn; that
I thought her
As chaste as *unsunn'd Snow*.— *Cymb.*

Hor.

Hort. UNSUNN'D Snow—The expreſſion is beautiful: but is not the image likewiſe new, and wholly Shakeſpear's?

Eug. YOU'RE in the right, Hortenſius; but I was ſo intent on the force of the Expreſſion, that I quite over-looked the novelty in the idea. The completion of Beauty is in their Union: of this we have an exquiſite example, where Jachimo ſteals upon Imogen as ſhe ſlept.

The crickets ſing, and man's o'er-labour'd ſenſe
Repairs itſelf by reſt: our Tarquin thus
Did ſoftly preſs the ruſhes, *ere he waken'd*
The Chaſtity he wounded.

Cymbeline.

To repreſent Lucretia by perſonifying her virtue, was a beauty in the Thought: the elegant preciſion with which the action is deſcribed, is a beauty in the Manner. In this analyſis, we diſcover the limits between Nature and Art; for if by Nature we mean the intrinſic Merit in the Thought; by Art muſt be underſtood, 1. Every advantage given to that thought, to the improvement of its original beauty. 2. Every ſuch happineſs in the manner, as ſupplies the want of Novelty in the Idea.

Aſp. The firſt part of your deſcription of Art, has been fully explained by the examples you have given: but, I do not as yet, clearly comprehend, how a happineſs in the manner can ſupply the want of Novelty in the Thought.

Eug.

Eug. We can beſtow a Novelty on a known object, either by diſcovering in it ſome new circumſtance or quality; or by varying and improving its uſual impreſſion. We have an example of the former, in the reflexion made by Helena on the vanity of her love for Bertram.

- - - - - - - - - Indian like
Religious in mine error, I adore
The ſun that *looks upon his worſhiper,*
But knows of him no more.
All's Well, that Ends Well.

Again, when the Shepherd, in the Winter's Tale, is queſtioned by Polyxenes concerning the love of Florizel for Perdita ———

Shepherd.

- - - - - - Never did the *Moon*
So *gaze upon the waters*, as he'll ſtand,
And read my Daughter's eyes.

I NOW come, Aſpaſia, to the explanation you deſire. When a known object preſents itſelf to us, through a new and unpracticed medium, we conſider the novelty as inherent in the object. It is much the ſame with reſpect to our ideas; whatever is original in the Repreſentation, is tranſferred to the Thing repreſented. For inſtance —— The conſideration that all men have ſprung from the ſame origin, and are deſtined to the ſame diſſolution, has been often employed, as a check on human pride, and an incitement to a ſocial affection. How is this urged by the Poet?

Arviragus,

Arviragus.

- - - - - - Brother, ſtay here;
Are we not Brothers?
Imog. So man and man ſhould be;
But clay and clay differs in dignity,
Whoſe duſt is both alike.

Cymb.

Is not the energy with which this Idea is conveyed, equivalent to a novelty in the Idea itſelf? The ſame effect may be produced by a happineſs in the uſe and application of a known image—As in the advice given by Lady Macbeth to her Huſband.

Look like the innocent flower,
But *be* the ſerpent under't.

Hor. FROM the light which you have thrown on this ſubject, we may account for the oppoſition in our judgments, when we beſtow on Writers the reputation of being Original. For, a Poet may be original in the manner, and not at all ſo in his Ideas.

Eug. TRUE Genius, Hortenſio, will be original in both: of this we ſhall have a further proof, in the uſe that Shakeſpear has made of the qualities and attributes of the Heathen Divinities. And here, I cannot but wonder, that a Poet, whoſe claſſical images are compoſed of the fineſt parts, and breath the very ſpirit of the antient Mythology, ſhould paſs for being illiterate.

See

See what a grace was ſeated on his brow!
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himſelf;
An eye-like Mars, to threaten or command;
A ſtation, like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heav'n-kiſſing hill.

Hamlet.

In this portrait, the features are borrowed from the antique; but they are united into a character by a creative fancy.—This power of giving an advantage to the moſt familiar objects, by ſome unexpected happineſs in their uſe and application, is particularly diſtinguiſhed in our Poet, when he touches on the Fables of Antiquity. —— Thus Perdita, at a loſs for

for a variety of flowers to beſtow on her gueſts—

- - - - - - - - - *O Proſerpina*
For the flow'rs now, that frighted thou letſt fall
From Dis's waggon! Daffadils
That come before the Swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; Violets dim,
But ſweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath.

Exclusive of the purpoſe for which I have produced theſe lines, you muſt have obſerved the uncommon art of the Poet, in characterizing his flowers.

- - - They at her coming ſprung.

A FINE imagination, like the preſence of Eve, gives a ſecond vegetation to the beauties of nature. In theſe principles, and in the examples by which they have been ſupported, we ſee clearly the reaſon, why every enlightened age has had, and muſt continue to have, its original Writers. We have no right, therefore, to complain, that Nature is always the ſame; or that the ſources of Novelty have been exhauſted. It is in Poetry, as in Philoſophy, new relations are ſtruck out, new influences diſcovered, and every ſuperior genius moves in a world of his own.

Jane Aſhe

FINIS.